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By ANDREW LANG

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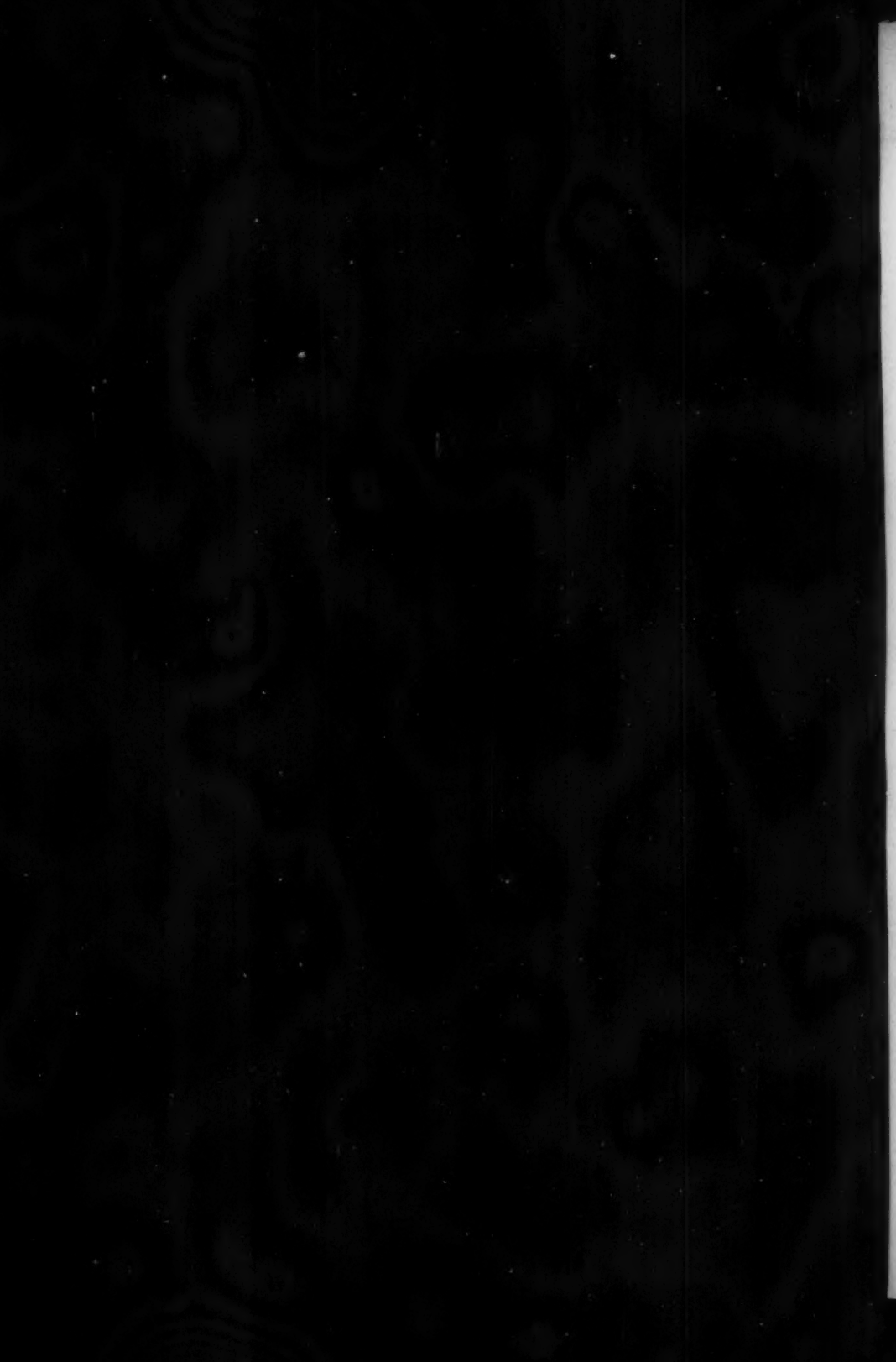
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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SEPTEMBER 1892.

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## *Mrs. Juliet.*

BY MRS. ALFRED W. HUNT.

### CHAPTER XXV.

#### THE GENTLEMAN IN THE STUDY.

Her mood is to be pitied.—*Hamlet*.  
O, woman's poor revenge,  
Which dwells but in the tongue.—WEBSTER.

IN spite of certain new anxieties, Juliet was so tired that she slept till nearly eight o'clock, when a servant awoke her by drawing up the blinds. A flood of sunlight poured in, and she realised that she was in a strange room and beginning a new day under entirely changed circumstances.

'Mrs. Pierrepont wishes me to tell you, miss,' said the maid, 'that she never comes down to breakfast herself, but that yours will be set out in your own sitting-room. You have had a look at your sitting-room, miss, haven't you?'

Yes, Juliet had seen it the night before, and had thought it delightful to have such a retreat provided for her. It opened out of her bedroom and looked into the garden. There was every material comfort at Eastthwaite, if only the human beings at present set in authority over her were not so perplexing. But perhaps all would be easy when she got to know them better.

How businesslike and prompt all Mr. Pierrepont's arrangements were! Almost before she had finished her breakfast her trunks came from Limberthwaite, and, fascinated by the possession

of a sitting-room of her own—a luxury she had never enjoyed when with Mrs. Caradoc—she instantly unpacked one which contained her desk, some books, and other things which would make her room look still more homelike. The view from the window was delicious; the garden lay stretched out before her, and there was a lovely and much more extended prospect beyond it. Some of the garden was orderly and formal, most of it picturesquely wild, and this wild part was insensibly merged in the fell-side, with its own magnificent garden of heather and bracken, out of which jutted great craggy rocks and majestic boulders, or in a beautiful little wood of silver birch-trees, lying at one side of it at the base of the hills. The day was by no means so fine as the sunshine which had half blinded her on first awakening had led her to believe, and now that she had been up a couple of hours and more she could see that the bad weather was slightly gaining the upper hand. Above were lowering clouds and grey mists, but from a rift far on high streamed down one ray of startlingly bright though watery-looking sunshine. White cottages, nestling amid their clumps of sycamores far away upon the fell-side, sparkled out in it, though they would not have been seen on a dull day, and their smoke, which was now bright too, tossed to and fro in thick, almost horizontal columns, or struggled upwards in uneasy gusts of thin-spun bluish white. Birds fluttered about, not flying as in settled weather, but showing the bright linings of their wings. She felt as if she must go out. Mrs. Pierrepont was not to be down till eleven, and it was not much more than ten now, so she went into the garden at once, but in her ignorance chose a path that passed Mr. Pierrepont's study-window, which was open, and he happened to look up, and by a gesture invited her to come inside.

‘I should like a few minutes’ conversation with you, Miss Caradoc,’ he said. ‘I wish, if you will allow me, to give you one or two hints for the regulation of your conduct. I will do it now as quickly as I can, and afterwards will leave you as much as possible to yourself. My mother had better never see me talking with you, for it would make her so suspicious that I am afraid you would not be able to get on with her. You can always come to me for advice or help in any difficulty—indeed, you must do that, I expect you to do that—but unless difficulties arise, the less you and I speak to each other the better. In the first place, my mother’s life is so sad and lonely that I must beg you to be so kind as to humour her in everything that is not absolutely hurtful to her.’

‘Will you tell me what is hurtful?’

‘Everything in the shape of excitement is hurtful. You must never allow her to let her mind dwell too much on the past—I mean, of course, on such portions of the past as she finds it painful to speak of. Her detention in an asylum, for instance, is a subject which always goads her into a state of semi-lunacy; and I am sure I don’t wonder—I can’t bear to think of it myself. I live in constant terror of that illness returning. I believe I suffered quite as much as she did all the time she was away.’ He was for a minute too much overcome by the recollection to go on, but suddenly he raised his eyes to Juliet’s, and, with a look of most pathetic pleading in them, said, ‘Miss Caradoc, owing to the peculiar circumstances, you are the one who will have the most power over her now; you *will* be careful—you will try not to let her excite herself by talking of that terrible time—you will try to get her to see the truth if she does talk, won’t you?’

‘Indeed I will,’ replied Juliet.

‘Thank you; but don’t let her talk of such things if you can help it. Keep her quiet; if she had to be placed in confinement again, I believe it would kill her.’

‘But what am I to do if she insists on talking? She is my mistress, so to speak, and she strikes me as a person who will have her own way, and is very much inclined to speak of what is uppermost in her mind.’

‘Ah, she talked a great deal to you yesterday afternoon, then? Against me, I suppose. I did not think that she would have begun so soon.’

Juliet was so angry with herself for having inadvertently made this admission that for a moment she was unable to answer, but before she did he himself spoke.

‘I don’t the least mind her speaking of this to you unless she gets too much excited. It is better that she should speak openly to some one—if not carried so far as to make her ill, it is a relief. As I said last evening, she was excited by your sudden appearance—that threw her off her guard. I must warn you that the delusion I spoke of is always there. She may seem perfectly well, and in all other respects is well, but she is firmly persuaded that I am not her son. That is now a fixed delusion. She always had it more or less, and this was as great a grief to my father as it is now to me. It injures no one but herself, however, and I should be a very unkind son if I let it make any difference in my affection for her. I sometimes think I love her, if anything,

more for it—perhaps poor human nature always does attach most value to what is withheld from it. I seem to think, if I had but my mother's love, I should want nothing else the world could offer.'

'She will be touched by your affection in time,' said Juliet pityingly.

'Never. At her time of life there is no chance of her giving up this delusion; there is, unfortunately, something else that is much more likely to happen, something that I want to warn you against. You must be careful not to let yourself be led away into believing that my mother's fancies are true. You shake your head, but there is a danger. These delusions are such terribly real things to the persons who suffer from them, that they never can speak of the idea which has taken possession of their minds without making it seem vividly real to those who hear them. I assure you, my mother sometimes comes to me and tells me that I am not her son in such an earnest and convincing manner that I find myself trying to see if in any way what she says can be true. But it can't,' he added with a sigh, as if for his poor mother's sake he almost regretted it.

'No, it can't,' echoed Juliet with conviction.

'Ah, you say that now,' he said kindly, 'but my mother is so clever, and so honest—I mean so firmly persuaded that I am not her son—that, sooner or later, I am very much afraid she will shake your belief in me; it will not be surprising if she does, she could shake any one's. I assure you she made the Chief Commissioner of Lunacy believe in her sanity; that's how she got out of the Scotch asylum. Scarcely an instance is known of any one being able to do that—the Commissioners don't like acting in direct opposition to the physicians employed.'

'She won't do that with me,' said Juliet. 'I think I understand the situation. I have heard of similar cases before. I will try to obey all your directions.'

She was about to leave the room but he stopped her by saying, 'You have not seen my mother this morning?'

'Not yet.'

'I wonder what she will take it into her head to do to-day. Sometimes she wants to do things which seem so odd to the servants that they make a great deal of opposition. Now I don't like this so long as it is nothing that will hurt or really ruin me; if anything of this kind should occur, if you will come to me, I will see that she is not thwarted—she ought to have her own way.

Don't let her know if you appeal to me; she must never have the least idea that I do anything to enable her to carry out any of her plans or fancies, or she will lose all relish for them, however subversive of established order they may be.' This he said with a very kindly smile. 'The one plain rule I give you is to keep me out of sight and mind as much as possible, and let her give any order she chooses, unless, as is occasionally the case, it is one that is absolutely preposterous. She won't do that to-day; I hear that she is remarkably well, and her mind at ease and clear.'

Again Juliet began to retire from a room which, so far as she had been at liberty to think of anything but what was being said to her, she had all this time been admiring. Mr. Pierrepont was sitting at his writing-table; every paper was in its place, every implement of penmanship ready to his hand, every book of reference well within his reach. The books on the shelves were in order too; he was evidently a man with an inborn sense of method and arrangement. 'I see you want to go,' he said; 'but do tell me if you don't think my mother a very beautiful old lady, Miss Caradoc; and doesn't she know how to dress herself?'

'Yes, I admire her immensely. She ought to be very grateful to you, Mr. Pierrepont,' Juliet added abruptly.

'Grateful to me?' he asked in much surprise.

'You think of everything for her, you seem so anxious to give her pleasure.'

'But she is my mother,' he said simply; 'and I often think she is grateful in her heart—I am sure she is when she is herself—and if she is not it is of no consequence, except as a sign of illness. You have no idea, Miss Caradoc, what she was to me before I went away to Australia. I often wish, only wishing is so painful, because so useless, that I had never gone. What could my father have been about? How could a man, who only had one son, let him go to the very ends of the earth?' He sighed, and said, 'Well, what's done can't be undone; we must make the best of such happiness as is left. You had better go, Miss Caradoc; it would ruin what I hope is going to be a much happier time for my mother if I made her suspicious of you at the very outset.'

'Indeed it would. Will you kindly tell me where I had better go to wait till she comes down?'

'Almost anywhere, so long as you are not here,' he answered, with a very pleasant smile. 'Stay—I think you had better go to the room where you saw her yesterday when you first came,



Wait for her there, and when she comes fall in with her humours. She will tell you at once how she wishes to spend her day.'

When Mrs. Pierrepont did come she looked fresh and dainty, and, owing to her slight, well-made figure, and quick but graceful way of moving, so young, that Juliet had to think twice before she could convince herself that she was close on sixty years of age.

'Ah, my dear, I dare say you have been wondering at my idleness,' said Mrs. Pierrepont. 'I have got into the bad habit of not coming downstairs till this hour. I find that the employments I gather about me to amuse myself with will just serve my purpose if I shorten my day a little at the beginning; but now that you are here it will be different.'

Then she sat down on the sofa and earnestly gazed at Juliet. Nothing so well conveys an idea of the peculiar attention with which she examined her every feature as the old expression, 'she diligently perused her face.' Juliet, having nothing to conceal, and being full of pity for this poor lady whose mind so cruelly misled her, thought that the kindest thing she could do was to submit to this examination as long as Mrs. Pierrepont liked without turning away, or seeming to remark it. What more natural than that the poor old lady, who, save that she had a hired companion, appeared to live in almost as great restraint and seclusion here as if still closely immured in the asylum, should wish to learn what she had to hope, or perhaps to fear, from the woman who had thus suddenly been thrust upon her as her daily and sole associate? At length Mrs. Pierrepont seemed to form a resolution, and spoke.

'Will you tell me if you have had an interview this morning with the gentleman who brought you here, and if he spoke about me?'

'I have had an interview with him,' replied Juliet, 'and he did speak about you. He did not say one word that was not kind, though.'

'Never mind what his words were. I don't concern myself about them. You own that you had an interview, and talked of me; I like your honesty. Be honest with me always, my dear; that's all I ask. Oh, I am wrong; there is one thing more that I must ask you to do, only one. Of course you are on the side of the person who brought you here—you would not have been here if not—but will you do me a favour? I shall spend so many hours of my life with you that I shall have no comfort if you don't. Will you promise to be so far on my side as never to



repeat any little slips I may make in conversation? My intention is never to make any; but man is frail, everyone makes slips sometimes.'

'What kind of slips?' asked Juliet guardedly. She began to think it looked as if she were going daily to be placed in situations in which she would have great difficulty in reconciling her duty to Mr. Pierrepont with her duty to his mother.

'I will tell you. I hold a certain opinion of—the gentleman in the study—the gentleman who brought you here, but in future I do not intend to express it; I particularly wish not to express it. Only you see I might—I might say something; and if I do, my dear, will you promise me not to repeat it to him?'

'Dear Mrs. Pierrepont, how can ——'

'Oh, don't be angry with me, or offended!' exclaimed Mrs. Pierrepont, wringing her hands nervously. 'You see, it could do him no good to hear of it, and it might—it would be almost certain to do me harm. If you will but give me this promise, I feel as if I could trust you implicitly; and it is a very long time now,' she added, shaking her poor confused head pathetically, 'since I have been able to trust anyone. I could trust you, I think, for you told me the truth so straightforwardly about having had that conversation with him this morning.'

'I promise—I promise most faithfully,' said Juliet, too sorry for her to feel any indignation; 'but I should never have repeated anything you said, and I don't think that Mr. Pierrepont would ever have asked me to do it.'

'Ah! my child,' she said, looking much troubled, 'you don't know—you can't know! But you have promised,' she exclaimed, making a strong effort to recover herself, 'and I trust you, and am happy. Now, my dear, don't let us say one word more about this—let us be happy. I feel as if I were going to be quite happy.'

Juliet was silent. This hope, where there was so little assurance of hope or happiness, made her more inclined to cry than to speak.

'You believe I am going to be happy—surely you do?' asked Mrs. Pierrepont.

Unhappy lady! Juliet believed it just as little as she believed that the day was going to be really fine; in both cases what was this temporary radiance but one bright flash of light in a world of darkness and gloom. Heavy rain must fall ere many hours had gone by, and 'who can minister to a mind diseased?'

'I hope you are,' she answered as confidently as she could; 'I only know that I will do all that I can to make you so.'

'And isn't that a great thing for me? Miss Caradoc, I have not chosen to complain of it, for that might have brought something on me that was still worse; but I have been lonely—I really have. Only think, I have had nobody to speak to but him and the servants for more than five years!'

'You have lived in this way for more than five years!' exclaimed Juliet in amazement. 'I thought you had always had a companion with you. I thought that I was only succeeding someone else of the same kind.'

'Oh no, no! for five years and more I have had no companions but my own bad thoughts.'

'You poor lady!' exclaimed Juliet, taking her hand and holding it in a close grasp of sympathy and most unfeigned pity; 'I wonder how you have borne it so well.'

'My darling, you have a heart! God's name be blessed and praised! He is showing mercy to me at last.' She kissed Juliet's hands and face repeatedly, but she was growing more and more excited, and Juliet was anxious to put an end to this conversation.

'Don't be nervous about me,' said Mrs. Pierrepont. 'Do you think that a woman who has gone through seven such years as I have is going to be made ill by a little happiness? It will be seven years on the first of December since he came to this house. They have been seven years of sorrow, anguish, and solitude. You think most of the solitude.'

'I want you to go out for a walk, will you?' said Juliet.

'I never walk for walking's sake, I always do something. What shall we do to-day? If we were men I suppose we should go out and kill something; being women, what shall we do?'

'Drive out, if you won't walk. Will that do?'

'No, I will go into the garden, I think; come along.'

They went, and Juliet soon realised the greatness of Mr. Pierrepont's generosity when he said that his mother's wishes were to be humoured at any cost. As a rule her wishes could be humoured only at a very great cost. That day, after she had paced the garden walks for a while, she took it into her head to make a rockery in a corner which she said looked uninteresting. So she tucked up her pretty grey dress and herself lent a hand to the work, and made Juliet tuck up hers and help too, and got the head gardener away from one important piece of work, and the two under-gardeners away from another, and the boy who cleaned

knives away from the kitchen, to help to carry stones; and when a great, and to her mind shapely, edifice of rock, and stone, and solid earth had been raised, she went prowling about to seek ferns, and, having borrowed a certain number from the wood and grounds, began to rifle the greenhouses. She did not temper zeal with discretion, but carried off some which were sure to die in less than a week if left out of doors, for the year was growing old. The more she had the more she wanted, and at last she insisted on having a very fine areca from the conservatory to crown the edifice. The gardener was furious, for this areca was the pride of his life, and when showing the conservatory to brother gardeners he was always apt to affirm that it was a much finer plant than any that could be found at Chatsworth. And this was to tower up above what he called 'a lot of common filix masses' on Mrs. Pierrepont's rockery for perhaps one day and night, and then be cut off in its prime—and such a prime!—by frost. Unseen by Mrs. Pierrepont, he stole away to carry his grievance to his master, there to be met by the chilling order, 'Do what your mistress wishes.'

After Juliet had been some time at Eastthwaite she found that this was how Mr. Pierrepont always behaved when anyone went to him with a complaint—he always aided and abetted his poor mother.

On this day, which saw the making of her new rockery, he all but effected a momentary conquest of her goodwill. One of the gardeners, when lamenting the spoliation of the conservatory, chanced to say, 'And that there hareca won't look half so pretty and natural as if we had just set all the "filix masses" by themselves in a clump at the top, and had then got a few good slabs of rock, with "Allysoris crippses" growing on them, to bank up with.'

'I almost believe you are right,' said Mrs. Pierrepont, 'but it is done now; besides, we haven't got the slabs of natural rock, and we haven't got the *Allosorus crispus*.'

Mr. Pierrepont had come out for a moment to look on, and, unseen by her, was standing close behind her and heard this. He instantly made a sign to one of the under-gardeners, and with him and a small cart proceeded to get some of these parsley-fern-grown bits of rock from the fell-side, but, near as it was in reality, he could not approach it with a cart without going over nearly a mile of rough road.

When he came back in triumph with them, Mrs. Pierrepont

was just watching one more areca (the gardener's second best) being placed up on high so as to wave its feathery plumes over its lowlier brethren.

'Oh, the lovely ferns!' she exclaimed, when the gardener drove the cart to the side of her rockery, 'the lovely wild creatures! After all, wild creatures are best.' Then she saw that it was Mr. Pierrepont who had brought them, and hastily and passionately exclaiming, 'Oh, how I wish you hadn't done this!' gathered up the skirts of her clothing and hurried into the house. He heaved a sigh so deep as to be heard by all, stood watching her departure with a pained look in his eyes, and not till she was quite out of sight did he turn to the men and say, 'Let us try to place these bits of rock and ferns as Mrs. Pierrepont will like to have them,' and himself helped to do it, but all the while his face was so sad that it was distressing to look at it. Juliet pitied him from the bottom of her heart, but it was not her place to pity him but to follow the wayward woman who had inflicted this suffering on him.

She found Mrs. Pierrepont lying huddled up in a corner of the sofa, weeping. 'It is so cruel of him to come about me in that way—so cruel to try to make me like him! Leave me alone awhile, Miss Caradoc; leave me, I beg.'

'No,' answered Juliet, kneeling by her and taking her hand in hers, 'don't send me away! Don't put happiness from you! Think what a different life yours would be if you would but open your mind to the truth—anyone can see that it is the truth. Would Mr. Pierrepont love you as he does, and bear with you, too, if he were not your son?'

'Oh, don't let us talk of these things! I must be left alone,' said Mrs. Pierrepont urgently. 'Go! I beg you to go! I might say something that I should repent. Dear Miss Caradoc, go! Come back in half an hour, and you will find me quite different; you really will.'

Juliet saw that she was afraid of saying something that might be reported to Mr. Pierrepont, and perhaps put the final touch to some half-formed resolution to send her back to the asylum. Juliet longed to tell her how unfounded these fears were, and how much she wronged the man whom she refused to own as her son, but such words at that time would be spoken in vain; so, after persuading her to lie down comfortably on the sofa, she left the poor lady alone.

An hour or two later, Juliet met Mr. Pierrepont in the hall.

He looked as if he wished to say something, but hesitated. Juliet, who was sorry for him, told him that his mother had been resting, and was now quite well.

'Thank God! I don't know that there is any need for it, but I never can help being anxious when she is in one of these restless, uncertain moods.'

'She is all right now. Can't the gardeners do something to save those ferns?'

'Oh, never mind the ferns. I am thankful to say there is money enough to let her waste a little. Poor dear! she was much excited this morning. What I wanted to ask you just now, and didn't quite like to say, was, whether you thought she would calm down more quickly if I went away a little. I will go at once, if you think so.'

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE PROTEST.

The welfare of us all

Hangs on the cutting short that fraudulent man.—*Henry VI.*

THERE was no need for Mr. Pierrepont to go away. For days and weeks Mrs. Pierrepont was perfectly calm and reasonable. She took great pleasure in Juliet's society, read, worked, did little bits of superfine cookery, and enjoyed other placid pleasures of country life. Juliet began to be almost happy too. She would have been quite so if she could but have known that her husband would some day return in safety, and that his confidence in her was restored. 'How well Mrs. Pierrepont seems to be,' she one day remarked to Mr. Pierrepont when she happened to see him alone.

'I wish the improvement was more real,' he answered. 'She is only exercising her strong power of will. She has a very strong will, and has transmitted it to me.'

'Why won't you believe that the improvement is real?'

'How can I dare to think that there is any substantial change when she still refuses to sit down to any meal with me?' Juliet had observed that he never did eat with them, but was not aware that it was by his mother's wish.

'Her delusion has quite as strong a hold of her as ever, only



she is so clever that she can keep it out of sight. If you were to talk to her about it, which I beg you not to do, for excitement is so bad for her, you would see that it is still there. She would tell you that I open her letters, and burn the answers; that the servants are spies, and that she is not allowed to leave the grounds; whereas the real truth is, that the servants are always giving up their places because it is so dull. We have a constant succession of strangers here; but they would all do anything for her, because she loads them with presents. She is free to go exactly where she likes. You have been here some time, have you ever seen anything to cause you to suppose that she was under any restraint?

‘Never!’ said Juliet, emphatically, for she never had.

‘Well, if you asked her, poor dear, she would try to persuade you that she had an army of keepers about her. Is there any book that she wants; I am going over to Limberthwaite?’

‘She wants Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*.’

‘But I can’t buy that there; I shall have to send to London for it. Is there nothing else that I can order when I am writing?’

When Juliet entered Mrs. Pierrepont’s sitting-room, almost the first thing that lady said was, ‘How I wish we had the new volume of *Modern Painters*!’

Juliet thought it advisable not to mention that before many days passed she would have it, and its predecessors as well. Again they had a happy, quiet day, though, now that the winter had come, their enjoyments were limited to the house. This day Mrs. Pierrepont talked of the good old days, when she was young and read Mrs. Radcliffe’s novels till she was afraid of being left in the dark, and sat up all night to devour Sir Walter Scott’s new novel, bought as soon as published. She knew her Misses Burney, Ferrier, and Austen by heart, and it was delightful to hear the enthusiasm with which she talked of the people in their books as if they were beloved personal friends. And yet all the time she talked, Juliet became more and more convinced that the background of her mind was occupied by some absorbing idea which she was vainly trying to banish.

‘You are thinking of something quite different, I know,’ said Juliet; ‘something disagreeable.’

‘Don’t remind me of it,’ said Mrs. Pierrepont sadly; ‘I am trying hard to forget it for awhile.’

‘Why not forget it altogether?’



'Impossible!'

'Oh, what is it?'

'You will know quite soon enough. It is something that I have to do.'

'You are not going to send me away?' exclaimed Juliet, in a panic of alarm.

'Send you away! Never!' replied Mrs. Pierrepont vehemently. 'I love you, dear, and will never let you leave me if I can help it.'

Juliet sighed, for it was clear that the future held in its keeping distress either for her or for Mrs. Pierrepont. If she left Mrs. Pierrepont, that poor lady would have sorrow to bear; if she stayed with her, it would be because she herself had undergone the greatest grief that could befall a wife.

'When have you to do this thing that you dislike so much?' she asked, to change the subject of conversation.

'To-morrow morning. Let us try to forget about it in the meantime;' but Juliet saw that she could not do that.

Next morning when, after breakfasting upstairs and reading a little, Juliet descended to Mrs. Pierrepont's room, about eleven, as usual, to await her arrival, she found her already there. Her hands trembled as she held them out to Juliet, and she looked grey and worn, and as if she had not slept.

'I told you yesterday that a very disagreeable duty lay before me,' she said. 'The time for doing it has all but come.'

'Don't do anything to-day that is likely to try you, you are not looking at all well.'

'I think I said that it was a duty,' replied Mrs. Pierrepont almost severely. 'We cannot spare ourselves when duty is in question.'

'But do it another day,' pleaded Juliet.

'No, this is the day,' said Mrs. Pierrepont solemnly; and though Juliet said a few more words of entreaty, she either did not or would not hear them, but sat with her sad eyes fixed on the fire, or raised inquiringly to the clock until ten minutes to twelve, when she rose and quietly rang the bell.

'Desire every servant in the house to come here at once, and I should like the outdoor servants to come too,' said Mrs. Pierrepont, when the man appeared in answer to her summons. 'They must all come at once, and you too.'

Before twelve o'clock struck, housemaids disturbed in their dusting, a lady's-maid plentifully stabbed with pins, a cook and

kitchen-maid fingering their white aprons, and gardeners suddenly brought in from the greenhouses, came awkwardly into the room. Some of these Juliet thought were there reluctantly, as if called on to undergo an ordeal through which they had passed before, and had hoped never to see repeated. Now, when it was too late, she wished that she had made a greater effort to stop Mrs. Pierrepont doing what she felt sure was going to be something extremely unwise, and, under the circumstances, perhaps hazardous. She wished it still more when Mrs. Pierrepont said to the butler, 'Go to—go to the study, and ask—the person who hired you, and gives you your orders, to come here.'

'Do you mean Mr. Pierrepont, ma'am?' enquired the butler, who had only been in the house about a fortnight.

To save Mrs. Pierrepont from having to beat about for circumlocutions which would serve to indicate the gentleman whom she would not deign to call by the name of Pierrepont, Juliet said to this man:

'Yes, ask Mr. Pierrepont. It is Mr. Pierrepont that your mistress wants,' and he went.

'If you please, ma'am,' said he, returning very quickly, 'Mr. Pierrepont says that he begs you to excuse him.'

'Very well, I will excuse him,' said Mrs. Pierrepont. 'I can understand his not wishing to be present.' She stood still a minute, as if gathering her strength together, and then, in a loud voice, said, 'Men-servants and women-servants, I have sent for you to-day because it is the anniversary of the day on which the person who is now in the study, and who lives in the house as if he were its master, first came into it. It is seven years ago this very day since I first saw his face. I wish to say in your hearing that he is neither my son, nor at all like my son; that I never have believed him to be my son, and do not believe it now; and that I make this public declaration and protest as a most sacred duty, for when my own dear son returns—as, please God! I trust he will some day—I do not wish him to have any difficulty in proving his right to bear his own name and enjoy his own property. I hope you all understand that that is why I speak now, and that I never have acknowledged the man who now bears my son's name to be my son, and never will.'

The men and women there assembled stood in stony silence, listening to these words and pitying 'the poor demented lady' who uttered them. There was a little shuffling and scraping of feet among them, but no one spoke. Mrs. Pierrepont seemed almost

to have expected that some one of them might have spoken, and given her the comfort and support of a word or two of sympathy and belief, but no such comfort was to be hers. She had been disappointed in the same way six times already, so the sense of loss was less keen.

'That will do,' she said gently. 'Thank you for coming. I only wanted you to hear my words; I didn't expect you to say anything;' but she looked as if she had missed something that would have been very precious to her all the same. They muttered a few words of which none but 'Thank you, ma'am,' were audible, and got themselves out of the room as quickly as they could.

After their departure Mrs. Pierrepont stood with eyes downcast, and looking as if she could not raise them from the ground. When she did raise them, Juliet saw that they were filled with large glistening tears.

'Oh, why have you done this?' she cried, too full of sorrow for Mrs. Pierrepont's imprudence to remember the duty of silence. 'We have been so happy and quiet, and now Mr. Pierrepont will be so angry! It does seem such a thing for you to speak of him in that way to his own servants.'

'You take upon yourself to reprove me, Juliet, but I have only done my duty. How could my son ever make good his claim if I were to live my life in the house with this man, tacitly admitting that he was my son, and never uttering a protest? Once a year I make this public protest, and, so help me God! once a year I will make it until my son returns, and no more protests are needed.'

'Dear Mrs. Pierrepont, none are needed; he has returned; he is with you now. Mr. Pierrepont is your son. If he were not, he would not be so patient and loving. Besides, your real son would long ago have come home. Think how long it is since he went away. Why should an only son with such great expectations as he had stay away?'

'But who can say what there may be to prevent him from coming? He is prevented, that is all I know. I repeat to you what I have just said to the servants—the man whom you believe in is not my son. At four o'clock this day, seven years ago, this man came to Eastthwaite. If I had not been ill at the time—so ill that the eyes of my body were dim, the eyes of my understanding darkened, and I myself brought so low that I had no power to do anything but listen to what other people told

me was true, I might have kept the wretched impostor out of the house ; but when I was well enough to get up and go about again, and could see for myself that he was no more my son than you are my daughter—and you are dear to me as any daughter—then it was too late, he had worked his way into my poor husband's confidence (his mind was failing at the time), and every word of doubt that I expressed only recoiled on myself.

'Hush, hush!' said Juliet, as she would have said to a child, 'don't talk any more in this way, don't go and make everything bad and uncomfortable again. We have had a very happy time for many weeks now. Don't go on persuading yourself that Mr. Pierrepont is not your son ; everyone else thinks he is : it is impossible that everyone should be mistaken. Oh, how much happier your life would be if you would but allow yourself to see the truth!'

'You want me to be dishonest. How can I make an impostor welcome to my house when I never see him, or hear him called by the name of Pierrepont, without torturing myself by the thought of what my own dear son may be suffering?'

'No son could behave better to you than Mr. Pierrepont does.'

'I don't deny that he behaves well. I think it extremely possible that he even behaves better to me than my own poor boy might have done ; but what of that ? Ought I to enjoy ease of life and happiness at the expense of the truth ? Ought I to connive at villany ? You couldn't do that yourself. You would hate it just as I hate it ; besides, why is my boy's future to be sacrificed to my comfort ?'

'Lie down awhile,' urged Juliet, tenderly leading her to a sofa ; 'you need rest, you are so excited.'

Ruffled by the word 'excited,' Mrs. Pierrepont darted an almost suspicious glance at Juliet, but said nothing, and quietly submitted to be warmly covered up on the sofa. There she lay quite still for some time. All the colour had gone out of her face, all the brightness out of her eyes. She looked so frail, so exhausted by the effort that she had made, that Juliet's heart was filled with pity for her and anxiety to prevent the repetition of such emotional scenes in future.

After a long period of silence, Mrs. Pierrepont stretched out an almost transparent hand to Juliet and said, 'I can't bear to see you looking so unhappy, dear child ; I only meant to protect my son's rights, not to vex or distress anyone—you are distressed.'

'Yes,' she answered mournfully, 'I am. You are not a young

woman. I want you to have some good of the rest of your life, and you won't if you go on in this way.'

'Ah!' murmured Mrs. Pierrepont, and Juliet could see a thrill of pain pass through her whole body, 'I see what you mean.' She closed her eyes and was silent again; but after some time said, 'Juliet, you think me mad, and I see myself that my conduct can only be explained in one of three ways—either I am suffering from a delusion and mad; or I am bad, and do not care how wickedly I act; or I am certain that I am right when I say that that man is not my son, and am driven wild by the impossibility of getting anyone to believe me. Do you think me mad? You may speak plainly, I like plain speaking.'

'I don't think you mad—far from it; but is it not possible to be quite sane on all points but one? Do excuse me. I mean——'

'I told you to speak plainly. You mean that I have a delusion; but if I have a delusion, I am mad. A delusion colours a person's whole life. Yes, if it be a delusion to say that this man is not my son, I have a delusion, and one that I shall never be freed from.'

'You are offended,' exclaimed Juliet, anxiously; 'but I should never have said that if you had not ordered me to speak as I really thought.'

'I am not in the least offended, my dear. I can readily understand your thinking me mad. I was once shut up in an asylum. I was not mad, I was not even ill, but I was in such an excitable state that anyone would have sworn I was out of my mind. Even I myself sometimes began to fear that I was passing the boundary of sanity.'

'Dare I give you some advice?' asked Juliet.

'Certainly, I should be very glad if you would.'

'If I were you, then, and believed as you do that Mr. Pierrepont is not your son, I would live quietly with him, and never say one word to show what I really believed, but would content myself with making an annual protest. That is quite enough. The hard things you say only make everyone about you contrast your conduct to him unfavourably with his to you. You ought to preserve a rigidly polite demeanour, and be very careful to say or do nothing that anyone can take hold of; and, dear Mrs. Pierrepont, when you are sending messages to him by the servants, is it not a pity not to speak of him by his own name?'

'How can I speak of him by his name? He takes good care not to let me find out what it is.'



'Ah!' said Juliet, with a pang of sudden pain. From the bottom of her heart she pitied both mother and son.

'I will do what I can,' said Mrs. Pierrepont kindly, 'but I think you forget how much self-restraint I do exercise. I should like to denounce that man in every Court of Justice and newspaper in England. I should like to go away and escape from the sight of his sleek, contented face. Well may the creature be contented. Good God, it is maddening to think of it!'

'Oh, why don't you go away, at any rate for awhile? It would do you so much good.'

'You forget that I have no money. He has got all my money into his own hands, and he wouldn't let me go. You think that I am free to do what I like, but I am not; and if I were to steal away without his knowing, I should only have to come back. Even I have learnt that no one can live without money. No, I must stay here, and exercise as much patience and self-restraint as I can.'

'He has to do that too.'

'Of course he has, and he does it very well. But he does not exercise quite so much as you imagine. He dares not go among the county people for fear of committing himself in some way and being found out. He dares not let them come here for the same reason. He keeps people away by spreading reports of my madness, and he refuses all invitations to their houses on the plea of having to stay here to take care of me—as if I would have him with me! But there is no seed of insanity in our family, thank God!'

'Will you allow me to say something else? If I were in your place, I would not amuse myself by doing things which could be brought up against me as tokens of eccentricity.'

'As, for instance?' inquired Mrs. Pierrepont, and it was painful to see her eyes fixed so wistfully on Juliet's while the answer was coming.

'For instance, I would not, to humour a passing fancy, have insisted on having very expensive greenhouse plants moved out on to a rock-work in the garden just as the nights were beginning to be so frosty that the plants were killed in a few hours.'

'Oh dear, oh dear! I remember I did that some time ago. I never once thought how strange that must look to the gardeners and people; and I daresay the man in the study encourages me in all the stupid things I do of that kind, just to have a number of proofs ready whenever he wants to say that I am mad again.'



'No such thought was in my mind, nor in his either, I am sure. I believe that he lets you do it out of pure kindness because you have so few amusements.'

'That's why I do it! That's why I do all those things that seem so strange to you, and to others too, I have no doubt. But I'll do them no more. I see what a handle it gives him against me. Juliet, you are a dear good girl to give me this hint; it looks as if you were a little on my side. If I had you quite on my side, it would be easy for me to behave so that no one could even for a moment support the opinion that I was insane—had a delusion, I mean. Juliet, I mean to give you such proof some day soon that what I say about the man in the study is true that you will not be able to help believing what I say.'

'You had better not,' said Juliet; 'you will not succeed, and will only distress yourself. What I want you to do is to forget all this as much as possible until this day next year. Make your protest then, if you wish; but you would be happier if you did not even do that.'

'Juliet, you are almost cruel, but you mean kindly. I must win you over. I should then have perfect sympathy from you, and perfect sympathy is what I want.' Juliet was silent. She felt that Mrs. Pierrepont would never be able to make her share in her most painful delusion. She was so deeply convinced of this, and so sorry for her and full of thought, that she was not aware that she had made no answer, but after some time had elapsed was recalled to presence of mind by seeing Mrs. Pierrepont's sad eyes. 'Juliet,' she said, 'you have such a fine fixed belief in delusions that I begin to think you have lived with them before.'

'I have lived with people who have lived with them. I had a governess when we were in Manchester, a Miss Amy Lowther, whose father suffered in that way. She used to tell me about his delusions. By the by, I learnt something from her which I will tell you, because I think it may set your mind at rest about your being placed in confinement again. No one will ever order that so long as you have sufficient control over any delusion you may entertain, or that they may think you entertain, as to be able to keep it out of sight, and never give any one reason to apprehend that you will either injure yourself or anyone else. Please excuse my talking in this way; you said I was to say all I thought.'

'I did. I like it. I speak plainly myself when I dare. I

will speak plainly now, and tell you another anxiety of mine. Juliet, you are so pretty, so charming, and unhappily so blind to the true character of that man we have been talking about, that I live in dread of his falling in love with you. It would be simply horrible if you married him.'

'I will relieve you at once of all anxiety on that score,' said Juliet; and there and then she imparted to her the information that she was married already—a secret of which she had for a long time been anxious to disburden herself.

Mrs. Pierrepont's astonishment may be conceived. Her womanly pity and interest did more to restore her to harmony with the world in which she lived than anything else could have done; and the conversation, which was a long one, on Juliet's hopes, fears, and prospects, ended by the poor old lady kissing her repeatedly, regretting that she was married, and could therefore not marry her son when at last he came back to gladden his mother's heart, and thanking her most warmly for her generous frankness in telling her so plainly what she thought and advised.

About four o'clock on this most exciting day, as Juliet passed Mr. Pierrepont's door, which was, as usual, ajar, he called her in. 'How is my mother now?' he asked, with much anxiety. 'I suppose what she did this morning is no secret to you. Perhaps you were even present?'

'Yes, I was present. I was very sorry about it. I have been blaming myself a great deal ever since it happened for not doing more to stop it. She is quite calm now.'

'I am glad of that. I expected her to be ill all day.'

'So did I; but we have been talking a great deal of other things—things that interested her, and she has said nothing about anything painful to her for some time.'

'That's right. That shows what a good thing it is for her to have you here; you are able to turn her thoughts away from painful subjects. She is generally in an agony of terror and distress after her "protest," as she calls it, poor dear! is made, lest I resent it.'

'But you don't, you couldn't.'

'Of course not. Besides, this is the seventh time that I have gone through it.'

'Oh, Mr. Pierrepont!' said Juliet timidly, but anxious to reward and comfort him for his forbearance, 'I think you will find your mother much calmer in every way after this. She has let me speak very plainly to her, and I have told her how strange

many of the things which she does must seem to those about her, and I don't think she will behave so eccentrically again. I made her see how the servants must look on her odd ways, and how they must talk, and how disagreeable this must be to you.'

'I am very much obliged to you. You have performed an excellent service, and it was kind and courageous of you. It is intolerable to me to know how her name must be bandied about in the servants' hall; servants have such a coarse, hard way of speaking of those whose minds are warped.'

And then he was silent for a minute or two, and as Juliet looked at his grave, thoughtful face she was startled to find that some words of Mrs. Pierrepont's had pushed their way unbidden into her mind: 'He does not like me to be quiet and reasonable. He may pretend that he does, but in reality the more extravagant and eccentric things I do the better he is pleased, for he thinks they will give him a handle against me when the time comes for him to begin to try to prove me mad.' Juliet started when she found what a base thought her mind was harbouring. But it was Mrs. Pierrepont's thought and not hers. If Mr. Pierrepont looked grave or angry, it was because by her own confession she showed him that she had been disobeying his orders, and letting his mother talk of matters that excited her. How good he was not to be openly angry about it! It was one more item to be added to her debt of gratitude to him. Never should she cease to be grateful to him for the generosity with which he had treated her when she was well-nigh forsaken by all, and never once since she came to Eastthwaite had he failed to be kind and considerate to her.

'You had better not stay here, Miss Caradoc,' he said. 'If my mother is calm now, don't let us do anything to bring back her excitement. She must not see you talking to me. Go to her; it does not do to leave her long alone.'

'You have just been talking to—to him,' said Mrs. Pierrepont, when Juliet returned; her hearing was almost preternaturally acute.

'Yes, I have; he called me in to ask how you were.'

'And what did you say?'

'I said that you were pretty well, and perfectly calm.'

'You did right. Not that he likes me to be calm, unless, indeed, he can make himself happy by thinking that I am sitting still, developing my disease.'

'Ah!' said Juliet, drawing a long breath. She could not bear to see Mrs. Pierrepont so persistently unjust to her son, and the

more she thought, the more admiration she felt for him. He was uniformly kind to his mother, and that under provocation of the most galling nature. He was uniformly kind to Juliet herself too. He had a delicate perception of the difficulty of her position, and never asked a question which it would be dishonourable in her to answer.

‘You don’t like me to speak against that man?’

‘No, I don’t. He has been so kind to me.’

‘I won’t speak against him again, then, if I can help it; but—oh! I must say no more.’

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ‘LITTLE AMY LOWTHER.’

Nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are used to them.—C. LAMB.

ANOTHER quiet and peaceful week had gone by when Juliet went one morning into Mrs. Pierrepont’s room and found her gazing with extreme repugnance at some books on a table by her side. These were four volumes of *Modern Painters*, in the first of which was written, ‘Mary Pierrepont, from her affectionate Son.’

‘He brought them to me himself,’ said the poor lady, with much disgust. ‘He came in here, and put them down beside me with the page open, so that I could not help seeing the inscription, and when I looked, as I felt, aghast at the words “affectionate son,” he said, “Mother, I am your son, you know I am; but, even if I were not, are you not far happier for having me? Could any son love a mother more, or do more to show his love than I? I may not succeed in pleasing you, dear, but you must own I try.” That’s what he said, Juliet, and it is true—he does try, he really does.’

‘Of course he does,’ exclaimed Juliet eagerly; ‘and he is your son. Do dismiss for ever the fancy that he is not. Oh, you would be so much happier if you did!’

‘Don’t insult me by calling it a fancy—it is a conviction, an absolute certainty. You may doubt me, but I told you that I would some day prove to you that I was right, and that day has come; I will do it to-day. I can go on no longer living, as I do, without the sympathy or belief of one human being. I must have

yours, Juliet; I do not despair of obtaining it. You shall have proof that will satisfy you this very day.'

'Oh, not to-day! Don't do it just when he has taken such trouble to give you those delightful books.'

'What right has he to give presents to me? They are all paid for with my money too. He has all my husband's money, and mine also. I had a thousand a year when I married. I always had the use of it till this man appeared. Now I am informed that I am incompetent to manage my own property, and he gives me a five-pound note or so at a time. I don't particularly care for money. I care for nothing at present but convincing you; only, if I fail, promise me never to let him know that I have tried to expose him. If you were to do that, all would be over for me. He would put me in an asylum again; and you don't know how dreadful even the best of these places is when once you are fast inside it. People may tell you that you become reconciled to them, but you never do. Just think what it must be to be shut up with a lot of mad people; to pass your life looking into eyes that cannot look sanely back at you! You don't know how thoroughly people's eyes show whether they are sane or not; and no one in those asylums looks at you with sane eyes but the keepers and doctors and servants, and these are all persons who have been told that you are mad, and whose interest it is to believe it. They watch you morning, noon, and night; you see them looking at you strangely and inquiringly, and the moment you say a few words more excitedly than usual, or venture on anything beyond dull acceptance of the miseries which have fallen to your lot, cold eyes are fixed on you to see if you are not about to require the discipline of greater misery still. I can tell you, Juliet, that when it comes to being shut up alone in a room in one of those barred-up little houses they have in their well-walled gardens for their worst patients, it is enough to make you mad in real earnest. Even the padded rooms, and the sight of the worst patients who are put into them in the public asylums, must be better than those solitary barred-up places in private establishments. And I, Juliet—I—was sent off with a safe-conduct from two physicians—two physicians were found to certify on soul and conscience that I was labouring under mental delusions and insane—and I was shut up in one of these establishments in Scotland, because I vehemently protested that this man—this man whom you believe in and trust, and have so many good words for—was not my son. Who is so likely to know her son as the mother who



bore him? That man is no son of mine, and nothing will ever make me own him as such.'

'Oh, you will be so ill after this!' exclaimed Juliet, for Mrs. Pierrepont was pacing rapidly up and down the room, gesticulating wildly, and pouring forth her complaints. 'Do come and sit down.'

'I don't want to sit down—I don't want to be quiet! I can't go on being patient and acting a part for ever! Besides, I am only doing what will please him. He likes me to be what he calls violent. I have often noticed that. Whenever I have been quiet for awhile, he does something to stir me up. I have been quiet lately, so he has brought those books. You doubt me, you think me "violent" too. I tell you it is enough to kill me, or anyone, to have to sit here day after day and week after week pretending to accept that man as my son. He is somebody's son, no doubt, but not mine, and I wish to God I had never seen him! Juliet, be silent! Take it calmly and wait, you say. If you were here in my place, could you take it calmly and wait? Could you bear to see an interloper established in your house, living on your property, enjoying the things your own true son ought to be enjoying, pointing out your ancestors on the wall as his ancestors, getting himself into your pedigree, and earning the admiration of all by his kindness to a mad old mother who would, as everyone thinks, try the patience of Job? I am as sane as you, Juliet, but I must have an outlet for my indignation sometimes. Do you think me mad?'

Juliet was startled by the suddenness and directness of the question. She had never quite thought Mrs. Pierrepont mad before, but there was something suspiciously near madness in her manner now.

'You do. It is only because I am so excited; but if I am really undergoing what I say I am, I suppose even you would own that it is enough to make me so?'

'Oh, yes, yes!' exclaimed Juliet, anxiously; 'indeed I would. But do come and sit down, don't let anyone see you like this.'

'You are right,' said Mrs. Pierrepont, with sudden quietness. 'It is not safe. Juliet, I believe you are a little on my side—are you?'

Juliet was silent. It was so difficult to answer this question which Mrs. Pierrepont was so continually putting.

'Speak!' said Mrs. Pierrepont; 'you must speak.'

'Dear Mrs. Pierrepont, I love you very much, and am very grateful to you.'



'I want more than that; I must have belief. If you will join in a little plot with me, I can make you give me that.'

Juliet shook her head, and said, 'You must not want me to do that.'

'There,' cried Mrs. Pierrepont, becoming wild again, 'you are just like the rest! The moment I talk excitedly, everyone thinks me mad. I ask you calmly—you see I am quite calm now—I ask you, as a sensible girl, can you imagine no circumstances so trying, so horribly hard to bear, that at times—at times, I mean, when policy did not force her to hold her tongue—a sane woman, speaking of them, must seem mad?'

'Of course I can. Even I myself have known such.'

'Would a woman, full of misery at the loss of her son, be likely to see with pleasure and calmness a perfect stranger to her, who must of necessity be a thief, taking that son's place and tormenting her daily to give him affection when all that ought to be given him is a long term of years in gaol? Could you see this with never-failing patience? Would your temper never give way? Could you give him the affection he wanted? Wouldn't you sometimes be tempted to break out into words and conduct which might cause people who either didn't know the truth, or wouldn't believe it, to call you insane? I have never done anything more than call the man who has established himself in my house a vile impostor—and he is an impostor! You won't tell him what I am saying—I know you wouldn't like to get me into a madhouse again—but he is an execrable impostor, and if my poor dear husband had but been younger and well, and not so anxious to believe in the truth of his story, and have his son restored to him, he would have seen what he was as clearly as I did. Juliet, if you won't join me in a little plot, will you promise not to interrupt me by any remark when I am speaking to this man as I intend to do? Promise me that.'

'Oh, yes, yes, I promise that. But do be calm. I don't think you know that Mr. Pierrepont is walking just outside there in the garden; you have not been looking, but he has passed the windows twice already. He will see that you are excited, and perhaps come, and if he does I am so afraid of your saying something you shouldn't.'

'Oh, where is he?' exclaimed Mrs. Pierrepont, in the greatest terror. 'Are you sure he is there? Why didn't you warn me sooner? Why didn't I see him myself? I don't want him to catch sight of me when I am off my guard in this way.' Her

excitement and anger at once gave way to the most pitiable fear, and she sank into a seat near Juliet, and sat as if waiting for some ill consequence to her words which must immediately follow. He passed again, and though the walk on which he was strolling backwards and forwards was some distance from the windows, both the women fancied he had seen that they were talking of something out of the common, and was on the alert.

'Let us talk quietly,' said Mrs. Pierrepont. 'Juliet, I have some courage when I dare venture to show it, but I have none now. For heaven's sake, don't let that man imagine that I am telling you anything about him! I want him to think that I have settled down into a state of quiescence, and that my mind is occupied with other matters. Let us go on talking, but let us do it quietly, and not seem to notice him. I can act a part quite as cleverly as he can. I can do anything to keep myself out of a madhouse.'

Juliet could not but remember some words Mr. Pierrepont had used a week or two before when speaking of his mother's illness. 'Mad people are wonderfully cunning: they can act a part so as to deceive anyone.' But she was heartily sorry for this poor mad lady, and said very kindly, 'Yes, let us talk of something quite different; only let me assure you that no one is thinking of shutting you up in a madhouse. I am quite certain Mr. Pierrepont is not. You should hear how affectionately he talks of you.'

'Does he quote Scripture? A friend of his is said to do so sometimes. You don't the least understand the person whom you insist on calling Mr. Pierrepont. It is his game to talk kindly of me—his interest; but if you want me to be quiet, say no more about him to me. Juliet, before we got so excited I said I would prove to you that he was an impostor, and I will. I have made a study of him and his ways. Oh dear! someone is knocking at the door. Come in.'

It was Mr. Pierrepont. For one moment Mrs. Pierrepont glared angrily at what she sometimes called 'the florid prosperity' of his face and general aspect; then she turned away from the sight of him, and did her best to compose herself.

'You and Miss Caradoc have been having quite an animated conversation, mother,' said he.

'Indeed we have,' she answered quietly, taking no notice of that red rag the word 'mother'; 'but we have settled down now—at least, we should be quite settled if we had all we want.'

'What do you want, dear?' he asked tenderly. 'Tell me.'

You know that it will be a pleasure to me to get it for you if it is a thing that can be got.'

'It is a purchase that is not quite in a man's line,' said Mrs. Pierrepont with a smile; and Juliet was simply amazed at her self-restraint and composure. 'It is some silk that I want for my work—a difficult shade to describe, and probably to procure. It is a sort of golden colour with a touch of bronze in it, like a dress I used to wear long ago; no, it's more like the hair of that little girl at Miss Mead's school my dear boy used to be so fond of having here for holiday afternoons—little Amy Lowther.'

'Ah! little Amy Lowther. But have you no pattern of the silk you want?'

'It was such pretty hair,' said Mrs. Pierrepont meditatively; 'something like that bronze-coloured German sealing-wax with grains of gold in it that we used about ten years ago.'

'Oh, I remember her hair perfectly; but I don't see how I could match your silk by my recollection of poor little Amy Lowther's hair. I am only a man after all, dear. Give me something a little more definite to go by. Can't you or Miss Caradoc find me a little bit of silk of the same shade of colour? If you can, I will ride over to Limberthwaite and get it this afternoon. What are you going to do?'

'Nothing particular—just talk.'

'I advise you not to talk quite so much, and not to excite yourself so much. Do excuse me, dear—it really is bad for you.' Having said that, he left the room, but not without throwing an anxious glance at Juliet.

'There, you see!' exclaimed Mrs. Pierrepont, triumphantly. 'He fell into the trap in an instant. Now even you must be convinced. My son never played with any little Amy Lowther! I invented that child myself, and gave her the name of that governess of yours you told me about the other day on purpose to show you how false he is; and there never was a Miss Mead's school either, and yet he seemed to remember it! Surely, this is enough to make you see for yourself what an odious impostor the man is!'

'Mr. Pierrepont wishes to speak to Miss Caradoc for a few minutes in the study,' said a servant, who had already knocked twice without making himself heard. They looked at him in well-concealed dismay, but neither of them could form the slightest conception as to how much or how little he had heard. Juliet slowly and most reluctantly rose to go to the study, expecting

nothing less than instant dismissal. Mrs. Pierrepont cast one imploring glance at her, but dared not do more lest Mr. Pierrepont's messenger should still be within hearing.

Mr. Pierrepont was standing on the hearthrug waiting for Juliet. He walked across the room to see if she had shut the door, and then said, 'Please, dear Miss Caradoc, never do this again. My poor mother is quite ill, I can see. She fancies a good talk relieves her, and perhaps it would if she could but enjoy it in moderation; but that she never can, so it does her an infinity of harm. Excuse me if I venture to say that it is not quite right of you to let her say so much after the warning I gave you.'

Juliet made no answer. Her course was becoming more and more difficult to steer. It was true that she had promised not to let conversations of this kind take place. She had failed in her duty to a man who had shown her the most generous kindness; but if half of what Mrs. Pierrepont said were true——

'Don't look so frightened,' he said; 'I am not angry with you. It is but natural that she should want to talk of what is on her poor mind, and I should not the least object to her trying to fill yours with her own beliefs and doubts if she did not get so excited in the attempt. Her old enemy is never far off, and if you let her get excited you open the door for its return. I must remind you that she is only released from confinement by the Chief Commissioner on a kind of sufferance. It would be a terrible thing if she got back to the asylum; never by any chance would she come out again. Don't let her say any more. Soothe her in every way you can. I know you have a difficult part to play; so have I. You see she is just in the state when she is too insane to be out of an asylum, and too sane to be in one. If she lived with people who did not love her, they would say, "An asylum is the proper place for her; why are our lives to be made wretched by her eccentricities and delusions?" But I, who love her, say, "Why is she, who is in many ways still so sweet and dear, and who is able to get some enjoyment out of life in spite of her delusions, to be thrust into an asylum where she would soon become a lunatic of the worst kind?"'

'She didn't become a lunatic of the worst kind when she was in the asylum before,' exclaimed Juliet, with a good deal of antagonism, for she had been much shaken by the Amy Lowther incident.

'Because she had the hope of seeing the Chief Commissioner at the end of the year and bringing him round to take her view;

but she couldn't do that a second time. She is gaining much influence over you, Miss Caradoc. I said she would.' There was no appearance of anger in his manner as he said this.

'She has made me very fond of her,' Juliet answered simply.

'Yes, I have seen it with the utmost thankfulness.'

'No one could possibly think of placing her in confinement again,' said Juliet, abruptly. 'She is not insane enough—in fact, I don't think that she is insane at all.' Hereupon she did observe a change in his countenance, but it was more like perplexity than displeasure, and he said, 'Then you are prepared to maintain that I am not her son?'

'Oh, I beg your pardon, I forgot that. But except that one delusion, she is absolutely sane.'

'Well, I don't know. Perhaps you have had no great experience of insane people, and you don't read books on the subject.' He went to his orderly bookshelves, and took out one or two. "'The first feature of insanity is change of character,'" he read. 'My dear mother used to be the gayest of the gay. I never knew anyone so joyous and trustful. You see her now—cold, suspicious, and depressed. "Great irritability of temper at trifling circumstances." You can't say you have not observed that. "Great loquacity." I think that, too, must have come within the range of your observation—at least, it has certainly come within the range of mine this morning. I sit with the library door open—it would be more comfortable shut, but it is a habit I have got into. You see, I am sometimes apprehensive that in one of her fits of violence my mother might hurt herself, or get into some difficulty or other, so I want to have an idea when anything unusual is going on, so as to be prepared to give help if needed. This morning I have heard her tongue going continuously in the most excited manner. I don't believe she ever gave you the least opening for putting a word in.'

This was strictly true; Juliet herself had rather wondered at it.

'I think we may therefore admit loquacity. Depression of spirits must be admitted too; and have you ever been able to persuade my mother to take a drive, or even walk beyond the grounds? If not, I think we must also confess to what this same authority speaks of as another strong symptom of insanity, "a disposition to seclusion." I will read you a little more: "Another feature is misanthropy, or general dislike to others without a cause, but especially directed against those who have the greatest claim on his or her affection. This feeling may after a time become



complicated with a delusion." Dear Miss Caradoc, you must see how closely this applies to my mother. Before I went to Australia she was the dearest mother in the world. When I came back, she was moderately kind to me at first while she was confined to her bed by illness, but as soon as she was well enough to go about she began to dislike me. This feeling of dislike to me, who have the greatest claim on her affection, continues, and is complicated with delusion—she refuses to believe that I am her son.

'It is terrible! I don't see how anyone could have a more cruel delusion,' said Juliet; but she found herself thinking, 'Perhaps, after all, it is not a delusion, for why did he so distinctly remember Amy Lowther?'

'There are worse delusions even than that,' continued Mr. Pierrepont, still referring to his book. "'The next stage is that the person who is a prey to delusion suffers from perverted taste or smell, and imagines conspiracies to poison him or do him some bodily injury.'" Miss Caradoc, if my poor dear mother begins to show any sign of imagining that her food is poisoned, I am afraid I shall have to go quite away and leave her in your care, for she would be certain to accuse me of it, and perhaps refuse to eat while I was in the house. However, she has not got to that yet, and, pray God, she never may. Anyhow, it is foolish to meet evil half way.'

'You think her much worse than I do,' said Juliet. She was half afraid that she had gone too far; but without an instant's delay he said, 'Thank God for that! for your opinion is worth two of mine. She is never herself with me.'

'She is almost always quite happy and calm with me. I believe that in a very short time you will find her completely well.'

'Never,' said he; 'she was born with a mental twist. And, look here, read it for yourself: "No one can escape from the tyranny of his organisation."'

'I had better go,' said Juliet, coldly. She did not like his determination to admit no hope, and that Amy Lowther episode had taken from her the only secure standing-ground she had. 'I must go. Mrs. Pierrepont may perhaps be wanting me all this time.'

Just as she was at the door he recalled her by saying, 'Oh, by the by, there is another thing I ought to caution you about. I am glad I remembered it before you left me, because it is so



important to keep my mother in an equable frame of mind. It is this: whenever she tells you stories and mentions events or names of people whom she knew in her younger days, and expects you to know something of them because she has talked to you about them before, don't ever let her see that you have forgotten; I never do. I always seem to remember every person and every thing she speaks of. It has a bad effect on her if I don't.'

Juliet at once breathed freely. A cloud of suspicion which had begun to gather was dissipated in a moment, for thus, and most naturally too, had he accounted for having fallen into the Amy Lowther trap. Suddenly she plucked up all her courage and said with a smile, 'You said you remembered a little girl called Amy Lowther just now. Perhaps you didn't, really?'

'Of course I didn't; but what would have been the good of saying I didn't? My mother would only have become violent, and have hurled at me accusations of being an impostor. I am a man of forty-three; I left England when I was sixteen. I did not come home till I was thirty-six. If my poor mother had the least conception of all that I went through while I was knocking about at the other side of the world, and what thousands of miles I travelled over, and what thousands of people I have seen and known and lived amongst, she wouldn't expect me to remember her poor little golden-haired Amy Lowther, whom I probably played with when I was in the nursery, for we seem to have gone to a lady's school together. I know nothing about the school either. Don't betray me, dear Miss Caradoc; you would only fill my mother's mind with a new crop of suspicions.'

'Oh, I have been so impatient to get you back,' said Mrs. Pierrepont, when Juliet returned to her. 'What a time that man has kept you! What shall we do to denounce him properly? I think I had better accuse him before a magistrate, or perhaps two magistrates would be better still, and then your bit of evidence about Amy Lowther will be quite enough to make him have to fly the country. Why are you looking so strange, Juliet? It will not be particularly disagreeable to you to give this bit of convincing evidence. What is the matter?'

'I am not so sure that it is convincing. I think, perhaps, it could be explained away,' said poor Juliet, who had just heard what she considered a highly satisfactory explanation.

'Not convincing! Explained away! O my God!' ejaculated Mrs. Pierrepont, who saw her one fragment of hope and comfort thus snatched from her. She made a great—a surprisingly great—

effort to restrain herself, and then said, 'Juliet, if I speak as I now feel, I might say something which would prevent our living happily together any longer. I don't want to do that, for I love you, and perhaps this defection of yours may be excusable. Will you, my dear, be so kind as to go to your own sitting-room till I send for you? I must be alone to try to reconcile myself to this cruel disappointment. I could not have believed that he would have been able to talk you over so easily. Oh, don't speak! Leave me, I beg you.'

(To be continued.)

## *A Reverie at Christie's.*

**T**HERE are moments when Messrs. Christie's rooms seem a better though a more expensive place to moralise in than Westminster Abbey. I confess to a passion for *bric-à-brac*—not for buying it, indeed, but for looking at it, and reflecting on its varieties and their curious pathetic fortunes. The sales of large pictures, the sight of the great statues and monumental sculptures of Greece, of Egypt and Assyria, leave me comparatively cold. These were public possessions, beautiful, majestic, but of less personal interest than mere knick-knacks, brooches, rings, swords, snuff-boxes, bon-bon boxes, ornaments, implements, vases, tables and chairs. Such things were constantly handled; they made a good deal of the pleasure of real people, of kings and queens, of fair ladies, of artisans, of soldiers, of church-going people, of the general mixed multitude. A dynasty rules and falls, and bequeaths to us a few caskets and swords—the famous lost silver casket that held Mary's letters to Bothwell and Mary's rhymes, or the sword that smote at Flodden, or the powder horn, his last personal possession, that Charles Edward gave MacInnes when he escaped from Scotland. Dynasties greater and infinitely older have left but a few scarabs, a necklace or two, the bronze axes and the chain of Queen Ah Hotep, the gold-hilted, bronze-bladed poniard, inlaid with hunting scenes in gold. The waifs of the long-enduring French monarchy, the books of the Valois kings, with their monograms and devices, the scattered jewels of the Church, so few out of so vast a store of wealth, the furniture of Marie Antoinette, her enamelled boxes and jewelled fans, the enamelled watch given to Fairfax after Naseby fight, the wonderful death's-head watch of Mary Stuart, the fragments of Prince Charles's plaid and brogues, the silver bull's head of Mycenæ, the Mycenæan rings with their strange sigils, the little bits of glazed cylinders of the first Egyptian dynasty, lost in the incalculable distance of the ages,

the Old English earthenware, with its amorous mottoes or Biblical texts, and the ill-spelled names of owners, all the lumber room of the world, one loves to rummage it. Here are pieces made by dead artists, whose very art, in enamel, in pottery, in curious metal work, is dead too, and can never be revived. Here are the secret marks of the ages, their very impress. These things are *épaves* of revolutions; the world is turned upside down, and still they are left on the surface. Conquests have come, with drums and trappings, and have not trampled these relics underfoot. The wild multitude has swept through palaces and shrines, destroying as it went, and these things are undestroyed. The fire has not taken hold of them; the grave has let them go forth into the sunshine. Great empires have existed for cycles, and are now dust, dust whence these tiny spoils are won, the rubbish heap outlasting the crown. Gods have ruled as tyrants, adored with holocausts of victims, beasts and men, and the gods are forgotten; but the sacrificial knife and the priestly mask are fresh as on the day when they first were donned or handled. Whole populations and races have left not even a name, but there are their clay figurines, their toys and tops and vases, their inscriptions, telling the story which no man reads, or can read, but which we know is just like other stories of rise, decline, and fall. If we could only find a clairvoyant, like these who are as common in stories as magic rings, and as rare, in fact, as those, what pictures he might draw for us. There are, in the Mexican room at the British Museum, some Aztec relics which almost make one shudder; they are so marked with the hideous mark of a fiendish people. Thus there is a glittering azure and rosy head of death, with shining eyeballs, with the teeth still white and grinning, fitted with a cloth cap, so that some one might wear it as a mask. Who wore it, and when, in what scene of dread, when priests were draped in the fresh skins of human victims? The skull is inlaid with shining blue turquoise, in little squares, with some rose red substance and black obsidian. The effect is simply awful, and carries to the highest pitch of refined horror that combination of the rich and the cruel in which the Aztecs, alone in the world, had the gift to excel. Beside the mask is the sacrificial knife, a broad, keen, stubborn blade of flint, firmly set in a plain wooden handle. With this the priest hewed out the still beating heart of the victim, and held it up before the gods, perhaps with one of those prayers which Sahagun has preserved, prayers which, of all literature, come nearest to the fervent purity of the New Testament. To us the

Aztec empire has left very little but these memorials—these and indecipherable MSS. with miniatures in which we still see the priest, clothed in the skin of a wolf, still slaughtering the victim. The penances of these American races were as cruel as their other rites. In bas-reliefs from Chichimec or Palenque you see the penitent kneeling, while the confessor drags a rope up and down through a hole in his tongue. Truly sacerdotal *bric-à-brac* is an uncanny thing; witness the thumb screws, and the boot, and all the morbid collection of instruments of torture lately exhibited. Yet religion, which has left us these trifles, has also left the beautiful chalice lately bought for the British Museum, the golden cup enamelled, as with miniatures from some rich manuscript, with scenes from the story of St. Agnes. The colours, the blues and reds, are like no colours that men alive can make; they are the last rays of that glorious sunset of chivalry in the waning fourteenth century. The cup has belonged to French and to English kings, and to a Spanish convent. Who knows in what revolutionary melting-pot it may lose its enamelled legends, and become common gold again, like the treasures of Delphi, of Susa, of Montezuma, of St. Andrew's? The rarest of religious *bric-à-brac* are Scotch ecclesiastical vessels of gold and silver. The Reformation sent them to the melting-pot. We have more of such wares from Greece and Rome than from our own country as she was three hundred years ago. How much of our modern *bric-à-brac*, undesirable enough in all conscience, will remain to antiquaries a few hundred years hence?

In the changes of things the marvel is that even the little of the old ages which we possess has escaped destruction. In looking over ancient MS. records of St. Andrew's University I found unpublished inventories of jewels, great silver crucifixes with movable crowns set with precious stones, gold crucifixes containing relics of the True Cross, rich manuscripts, gold and silver cups and bowls and sacred effigies, piles of cloth of gold and rare embroideries. Where are they now? Burned, melted, scattered, unknown in collections, not to be discovered in the shops of them that sell. *Aflavit Joannes Knox, et dissipantur*. We destroy, but we cannot restore. We imitate, but we cannot create. Look at the two golden cups from the Vapheio grave; they are shown in Miss Sellers's translation of Schuchardt's book on Dr. Schliemann's excavations.<sup>1</sup> There are tame bulls grazing in a wood, and wild bulls fighting with men, wrought in

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans.



*repoussé* work. These golden vessels are of an unknown antiquity; they may be older than Homer, who describes men capturing wild bulls on the hills, and binding them with ropes. Some nameless Benvenuto Cellini wrought them for some forgotten prince of the house of Atreus, in ages of which history keeps no count, in centuries whereof even legend babbles not. They rise out of an unknown world, and give assurance of an artist. We can do nothing like them. In the Gold Room of the British Museum is jewellery lately won from a grave in Ægina. Mr. Giuliano could not devise, he could only imitate (and very well) the delicate, ingenious tracery of the golden necklaces. There are gold rings shaped like the Boeotian buckler, not signet rings, but inlaid with twisted patterns in blue enamel. There is a cup of pure gold, with a corded ornament in relief. Such a cup Achilles may have taken from its silken swathings in his chest, and poured forth libations to the gods, and wiped it again, as we read, returning it to its place. Looking at it, we look back across five empires, across the spaces of known history, through the mist of tradition, back to the sunny years when Homer sang, when spears were splintered for

The face that launched a thousand ships  
And burned the topless towers of Ilium.

Helen may have worn such necklets as these, and these golden studs may have adorned the bridal raiment that Athene wove, while yet Troy stood and the wealth of Priam was yet secure. We may even be gazing, here and at Athens, in the Mycenæan treasury, at the loot of Troy. In those times *bric-à-brac* had a better chance of surviving than to-day, for it was committed to the protection of the sacred dead, to the invisible guardianship of the grave. In our Museum is the great golden corslet which the ghost failed to keep ward over. Near a mound, at Mold, a ghost in golden armour was occasionally seen in the twilight; but he defeated his own purpose: the mound was excavated, and, instead of a ghost, a policeman at present guards the golden corslet in its glass case. The Psychical Society should engage a member to keep watch in the Gold Room at night. The ghost may return thither; the place may be full of the robbed shadows who wore these gems, gifts of friendship or love. The Greek, the Etruscan, the Roman, the English kings whose *bric-à-brac* is stored here, the men who fell on the scaffold in 1746 (they too are commemorated in a ring), the Sidonian merchant men who trafficked in these silver bowls and beads of amber may visit their

own : such jewels are haunted, I think, those bronze axes, adorned with sculptures, those gold-hilted daggers of old Egyptian dynasties, that may have been worn in the pursuit of Israel, those betrothal rings which survive the hearts and the hands that they symbolise, and outlive the love and the regret.

The sale of the Magniac collection really prompts to this rhapsody over the treasures that have survived the wrecks of empires and the ruin of peoples. Mr. Magniac rejoiced in no common share of the secular lumber-room. There are touching items—'A gilt metal pinnacle, broken during the French Revolution from the tomb of Charles the Bold, at Dijon. Bought of one of the mob by an old antiquary of Dijon.' What harm was Charles the Bold doing to one of the mob? How things are scattered! A large dish of Limoges enamel, by Martial Courtois, and a composition from the Apocalypse, belonged to 'two aged ladies' in Bedfordshire, in 1835. Mr. Magniac bought them for 30*l.*, twice the price at which they were valued, not a tenth, probably, of their now estimated value. How did they drift down from a French court to two aged ladies in Bedfordshire? The enamel plaques from the frames of portraits of the Cardinal de Guise and his mother have dropped out and been removed from time to time. There is the Stuart casket of ivory, with silver gilt and enamelled mounts, with a beautiful ruby set in one of them : a casket made in Chaucer's time, or earlier, for some French or English prince. How did it escape the great French wars, the wars of the Roses, and out of two revolutions, so that Henry IX. (the Cardinal York) still owned it at his death in the present century (1807)? How the Stuarts kept so much of their hereditary *bric-à-brac*, all dispersed at the sale after Henry's death, or by bequests from him, is rather a puzzle. Among all the treasures, if I had gold, I think I should have chosen a modest one, a tiny enamelled plaque. Achilles, with a comrade, is kneeling in the temple of the Thymbræan Apollo, and the temple is a basilica, with a beautiful pillar of white marble, and Apollo is a saint in a niche, and Paris is stealing up to Achilles and aiming the fatal arrow. Not so does Quintus Smyrnæus tell the fate of Achilles's death. In Quintus it is Apollo himself who shoots Achilles in the ankle, and the hero falls, challenging his assailants to draw near him, 'for I know that none of earthly men will avail to come nigh and smite me with the spear.' On Olympus Hera chides Apollo. "Phœbus, why hast thou wrought this disastrous deed to-day, forgetting quite that wedlock which we gods made for

Peleus. Yet in the midst of us, as we feasted, didst thou sing, when silver-footed Thetis left the salt sea deeps to be Peleus's bride, and at thy harping gathered all the wild tribes of earth; beasts, and birds, and the deep-ravined hills, and rivers, and the shadowy woodlands came; but this hast thou forgotten, and wrought a bitter sin, slaying a man divine! . . . " But not one of the Trojans dared to approach Achilles, all wounded as he was. Nay, as men gather about a wounded lion they held aloof, and the arrow of the god overcame him. Yet even so he leaped up, and sprang among his foes, and slew Orythaus, dear comrade of Hector.'

Homer prophesies Achilles's fall beneath the shafts of Paris and Apollo in the Scæan gate; but his murder in Apollo's chapel is part of the mediæval legend, lingering on in this beautiful enamel. Certainly one would prefer it, if one had a choice, to a very uncomfortable kind of chair at 105*l.*, or even a pair of bellows at 400*l.* A decorative pair of bellows! It is as absurd as a decorative putter. Some 3,500*l.* for a ewer of Henri Deux ware is also exorbitant. A considerable capital is at the mercy of the housemaid, and the object is curious and rare rather than lovely. 'To all appearance the art seems to have died with its author,' and it is less to be lamented than several other lost arts in Pancirollus. The pieces are not only peculiarly light but peculiarly fragile.

All those beautiful things, so ingenious, so lovingly laboured, so rich in gold, and colour, and fantasy, may well make one melancholy. We can make none of them; we have not the ideas, the cultivation, the skill, nor the time to bestow. We can make telephones, and perhaps Mr. Maxim can make a flying machine, and, as he proposes, may rise from the French coast and drop half a ton of glycerine in an English city. We can get bad news more quickly, we can crowd into places that should be lonely more rapidly, we can litter continents with jam pots and sardine tins, but we cannot create the beautiful, we cannot make life splendid and gracious. We can only collect all the spoils of all the past, and store it in glass cases, and be learned, or sentimental, over the loot of dead ages and the rubbish heaps of fallen empires. Look, as Mr. Lowell suggested (in an essay on Marlowe in *Harper's Magazine*), look at any American coin! Consider the sleeriness of it, the absolute degradation of the type. I am too loyal to refer to our own remarkable medals; our chief business with them is to get plenty of them.

Thus Christie's begets what we may call a noble or not so noble a discontent with ourselves. The heirs of all the ages past, we are doing very little for the ages to come. To pay some 7,000*l.* for a horn which we cannot use, and could not make, is rather an uneconomical action. The money spent on one horn, if spent otherwise, would help to restore our art. But human evolution is not greatly to be influenced by an isolated growl. It is something that so much remains, so many waifs of the past, so many things which bring us into contact with men very like and very unlike ourselves. Such men, if they had smoked, would have made even a cigarette case a jewel and a joy for ever. There may be more art in a Louis Quinze snuff-box than in the biggest room of the Royal Academy. A world which has practically lost the arts of miniature painting and of enamel may boast of progress, but the progress is not all in the right direction.<sup>1</sup>

A. L.

<sup>1</sup> It is suggested by an eminent Aztecologist that the skull-mask was used, like our judges' black cap, in pronouncing capital sentences.

## *A Greeting.*

**F**ROM the long shadows and the shining heights,  
 The land of vanished hopes and lost delights,  
 Comes yet another pilgrim, moving still  
 To the sweet music of the wood and hill,  
 With the glad light still shining in his eyes  
 Of suns that nevermore for him shall rise;  
 Not clearly knowing that his feet are set  
 On the long, dusty highway of regret.  
 He lingers, listening for the tremulous note  
 He loved to hear, at summer dawning, float  
 About the green hillside, where love has lent  
 To the sad curlew measureless content.  
 Brother, we too have heard it, we have seen  
 The purple heather and the woodland green;  
 We have touched the deepest depths, who once had thought the  
     heavens to gain,  
 Hope is turned to fell despair, and all our joy to bitter pain.  
 We, who could not wait for dawn, but westward followed still the  
     sun,  
 See the shining heights behind us, feel our pulses slower run.  
 We, who gathered all the blossoms, weaving wreaths our brows to  
     crown,  
 Seeking fruit in this our autumn, find the branches bare and  
     brown.  
 Yet we wear the mask of smiles, and march upon the way of Fate  
 With so brave a mien and bearing that men deem us fortunate.  
 All the heaven that we have lost, and all the hell that we have  
     won,  
 They are naught to any man but us, and can be known to none.  
 And the world may call us happy, crowned with honour and  
     success,  
 But the heart, the heart, my brother, knoweth its own bitterness.



Come down to us ; the golden days are dead,  
The swallow and the summer-time have fled.  
Come down, for thou hast fashioned thine own fate,  
And through the long, unlovely days must wait  
Where song is silent, and all streams are still ;  
Wait with dull heart, and watch with dim eyes till,  
From the long shadows and the downward steep,  
Comes the great Healer and the dreamless sleep.

DUNCAN J. ROBERTSON.

## *The Plucking of a Rosebud.*

### CHAPTER I.

THEY were both yawning when Miles Corbet first caught sight of them. It was the one point of resemblance between the mother and the daughter, and even this was modified by the fact that while Lady Craigdarroch yawned furtively and hastily, as if she were ashamed of it, Miss Craigdarroch, making a slight perfunctory gesture towards her chin, opened her pretty mouth wide with great frankness and nonchalance, though she shut it again rather abruptly as her glance met his.

He was glad that they were so unlike. It must, he reflected, be very unpleasant for a girl to have before her in her mother a continual reminder of what she herself would be thirty years hence, and to know that other people had it before them too.

In Miss Craigdarroch's case the mere idea of what she would be at fifty made him aware how much of her charming beauty was merely *beauté du diable*. What would she be without the radiant freshness of her colouring, the delicate rose tint and the child-like curve of her cheeks, the almost infantine candour of her large blue eyes, her softly rounded outlines? And then he remembered that this was a most unnecessary question, since her appearance in later life would certainly be a matter of complete indifference to him. She was lovely now, and that was enough.

She wore a quaint dress, copied, Corbet guessed, from some portrait by Vandyke — a white dress, with large full sleeves gathered into a frill round the elbow, and a long-waisted, pointed body, finished at the neck by a wide turned-down collar trimmed with magnificent old lace. In one hand she held a round-shaped crimson feather fan, as old-fashioned as her Charles I. collar.

Corbet had a good though rather distant view of her, as he stood behind the outer ring of a large circle of people who, un-

like himself, had been fortunate enough to find chairs, and she and her mother were opposite him in the front row of the circle.

This circular arrangement of the assembled company made them look a little as if they were playing some frivolous game, whereas, on the contrary, they were listening with great attention to an elderly gentleman who stood in the clear space reading aloud from a manuscript, and were assisting, not at an ordinary evening party, but at a session of the Order of the Blue Rose, which, as everyone knows, is a society for the purpose of maintaining a belief in true kingship, opposing democracy, and, above all, commemorating the virtues and sufferings of our Stuart sovereigns, and must on no account be confused with the United Jacobite Brotherhood, an offshoot which has lately blossomed out in a startling manner, and is in consequence disowned by the parent stem.

The manuscript was an essay, of the elderly gentleman's own composition, on 'The Religious Toleration of James II.,' and the opening sentence, which ran somewhat as follows, 'Those who have been nourished from their youth upon that brilliant and entertaining work of fiction, Macaulay's *History of England*, would perhaps fancy that the religious toleration of His Majesty King James II. was hardly so marked a feature of his character as alone to furnish material for an essay,' had impressed Corbet deeply, and the essayist would, in fact, have held his attention to the end had not his eyes chanced to rest on Miss Craigarroch.

'She must be still prettier when she smiles,' he thought, and just at that moment the young lady, looking apparently full at him, nodded graciously, and smiled a delicious smile that brought sudden dimples to her round cheeks.

Corbet turned hastily to the man standing next him—the friend at whose invitation he had come to the Blue Rose Session.

'You know that little girl?' he said.

'Certainly I know her. Think she's pretty?'

'I do. When this reading business is over I wish you'd introduce me.'

His friend looked at him with a rather pitying smile.

'Oh, certainly. She's a jolly little thing, and not a bit stuck up; but all the fellows will be wanting to talk to her, and her mother—who is stuck up if you like—don't let her pick and choose for herself. She's pretty civil to us members, for she thinks we are young men of good principles, but——'

'Is she keen on this society, order, or whatever you call it?' asked Corbet, giving him no time to finish his sentence.

'You bet she is! Why, she is a pillar of the order, the concentrated essence of Blue Rose!'

Here a lady sitting in front of the two men glanced round reprovingly, and they subsided into silence.

Henceforward Corbet wore an air of rapt abstraction, and any casual observer would have supposed him to be following every turn of the elderly gentleman's arguments, to the exclusion of all exterior considerations.

In reality, he was making an exhaustive study of Lady Craigdarroch's appearance,

He saw a pale-faced woman of about fifty, who had a high forehead, a long nose, a receding chin, and an expression of weary amiability, whose light-brown hair would have looked better had it not been arranged in precisely the same manner as her daughter's corn-coloured locks. This, to do her justice, was her one effort at juvenility; her dress, as described by Corbet, was an 'old green dressing-gown.'

'She don't look formidable,' was his mental verdict.

He reconsidered it a moment later, for Lady Craigdarroch's half-open mouth closed tightly, she straightened her limp figure, and her light prominent eyes took a startling intensity of expression.

'Those,' read the essayist, 'who in their single-hearted devotion to a divinely appointed monarch were ready and willing to lay down their lives——'

Here there was great applause, to which Lady Craigdarroch contributed energetically, while her daughter tapped the fingers of one *sûde* gloved hand against the other in a rather perfunctory manner.

'Ah!' said Corbet half aloud. But the general enthusiasm prevented anyone from hearing him.

When the Chancellor had closed the session, tea and coffee were the order of the day. Mr. Wooton, Corbet's friend, was soon taken up in attending to the wants of several ladies of his acquaintance; he introduced Corbet to the wife of the Vice-Chancellor, and Corbet made himself most agreeable to her. The good lady quite regretted that she was in a hurry to get away, and before going introduced Corbet to no less a person than Lady Craigdarroch, saying, as she did so, that this was Mr. Corbet's first glimpse of the Order of the Blue Rose, that he was

very anxious fully to understand its aims and principles, as to which no one could enlighten him more fully than her ladyship. It was an auspicious form of introduction, for Lady Craigdarroch had been one of the founders of the order, and always regretted that her husband, the late Sir Alexander, had not lived long enough to be its Chancellor; nevertheless, she looked at Corbet with a disconcerting blankness.

Corbet was a good-looking young man, with a pale complexion and singularly handsome grey eyes.

He began at once to express in well-chosen terms his appreciation of the essay he had just been listening to, mentioning especially how much he had been struck by a certain sentence which I have already quoted, and which he now quoted word for word. As she listened to it the vague blank expression vanished from her ladyship's eyes.

'Yes,' she said, fixing them full upon him; 'yes, it is a beautiful sentence, and I am glad you appreciate it; but how many people nowadays, do you think, would live for any cause, still less die for it? You, for instance, Mr. Corbet, no doubt admire the sentiment it expresses, but you are not even a member of our order.'

The seriousness of the young man's expression deepened to an almost tragic sadness.

'I am afraid,' he said, 'I should hardly be welcome.'

'Not welcome? Why not, pray?'

'Lady Craigdarroch, there is a reason, a very serious reason, which I fear you would think more than enough to justify my doubt.'

He glanced apprehensively at some people near him, though he had lowered his voice.

'Come back here,' said Lady Craigdarroch impulsively, 'and let us sit down.' She seated herself on a chair among the rows now left empty, and Corbet sat down beside her.

'I don't believe I should think anything of this obstacle,' said Lady Craigdarroch kindly. She was naturally kind-hearted, and she saw before her such a promising convert.

'Lady Craigdarroch, I am afraid that, if I tell you the truth, you will get up and turn your back on me.'

His hearer was somewhat startled. It had suddenly occurred to her that this strange young man might possibly be a little cracked, but being at once courageous and inquisitive she said quite airily:



'Oh, I don't think that's likely; but, of course, I don't wish to force your confidence.'

'I daresay you have noticed,' said Corbet thoughtfully, 'how sometimes one can confide to an entire stranger what one would never think of mentioning to one's near friend. That is my case at this moment. No one knows what I am about to tell you; the fact being,' he added rather bitterly, 'that most people would only laugh at it.'

'What is it?' said her ladyship, feeling a little agitated, but trying not to show it. 'What can it be?'

Corbet, leaning forward and lowering his voice, spoke for two or three minutes, during which Lady Craigdarroch's eyes widened till they became perfectly circular.

'Poor young man!'

Lady Craigdarroch and her daughter were side by side in their comfortable brougham, and had left the well-known building where the 'session' had taken place some way behind them.

'Poor young man!'

On hearing this ejaculation repeated for the second time, Miss Craigdarroch roused herself.

'What poor young man, mother?'

Lady Craigdarroch put her hand on her daughter's arm.

'My dear, didn't you see me talking to him while you were having coffee?'

'I saw you talking to a man "of sorts," and I thought how solemn you were both looking.'

'Didn't you think he had a very interesting, striking face?'

'Well, I don't know,' said Miss Craigdarroch; 'had he? I hardly looked at him.'

'Oh, my dear, I don't know when I have felt more touched or more sorry for anyone; it is so sad!'

'What is?'

'That young man's position. He was telling me all about it. He said so truly that one often can tell an utter stranger what one would shrink from confiding to one's nearest and dearest. Fancy, he is the great, great, great, great, great-grandson of the wretched regicide, Miles Corbet, one of the murderers of our martyred king! And not only does he feel terribly being descended from such a wretch, but he firmly believes that he is the object of a sort of retributive justice—of which he certainly gave me some strange and convincing instances. I *can't* repeat

them, because he begged me to tell no one about all this. He says truly that, if it were generally known, he would merely be misunderstood and laughed at; even his friends would chaff him. You know what modern young men are: they don't respect the most sacred things and feelings! Poor fellow, he knows the Baldwins; he will be at their dance. I have half a mind to ask him to call on me.'

'Hum!' said Miss Craigdarroch, 'I should find out about him first.'

'My dear,' said her mother, 'you don't quite understand my feeling about this; you girls of the present day are so—well, so prosaic!'

But Miss Craigdarroch understood her mother perfectly.

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## CHAPTER II.

THE Baldwins' dance was a great success. The supper left nothing to be desired, and there was a sufficiency of dancing-men. These are two points on which you cannot trust the verdict of the fair sex. At a ball-supper, girls, at any rate, hardly know what they are eating, and as to the other point they are sure to be contradictory, for those who do dance will tell you that there were 'crowds of men,' while those who don't dance will tell you that there were 'absolutely no men—anyhow not a man in the room fit to dance with.'

Miss Craigdarroch was emphatically a girl who danced; more than that, what she enjoyed most at a dance was the dancing, and she was apt to overlook a man's solid merit and even his attractions if his dancing was not among them, and begrudge him so much as a polka.

Presumably she had noticed Corbet's dancing before her mother introduced him to her, for she said briefly but decisively in reply to his request for a dance, 'You can have number nine; it's a waltz.' It was certainly a success, that first waltz of theirs; without once pausing to draw breath they floated over the floor in perfect unison, and though it lasted but a few short minutes it took them some way towards friendship.

When, after their second waltz together, they were sitting out in a quiet corner they had already got some way beyond the 'Splendid floor!' 'How pretty the room looks!' style of conversation.

Miss Craigdarroch was scanning Corbet's programme, and was disappointed to find it almost a blank.

'No wonder you didn't mind my looking at it, Mr. Corbet,' she said as she gave it back to him.

'Well, I don't care to do like a girl I know, who put down the imaginary names of the partners she hadn't had.'

'Do you mean to say that you have only energy for two round dances?'

'Try me!'

Miss Craigdarroch did not answer this speech, although it was obvious that she had heard it. 'There goes Ivy Baldwin,' she said, indicating a girl who had just passed them. 'Isn't Ivy a pretty name? I wish I was called Ivy Craigdarroch!'

'I daresay your name is quite as pretty.'

Miss Craigdarroch turned sharply on him and her eyes flashed.

'Someone has told you what I'm called?'

'Not at all,' said Corbet, trying not to smile.

'Well,' she said, with a little sigh, 'try to guess what my name is. It's a Scotch name.'

Corbet's knowledge of Scotch names was limited. He tried 'Jean,' 'Effie,' and 'Flora,' without success.

'Can't you get outside Scott's novels?' said Miss Craigdarroch a little scornfully. 'He would never have handicapped one of his heroines with a name like mine. It's Griselle.'

'Griselle! But I like it! Is it short for Griselda, patient—I beg your pardon—*impatient* Griselda?'

Miss Craigdarroch laughed. 'Just in time!' she said. 'Everyone I tell my name to says, "Hum! ah! patient Griselda!" And then I hate them. And my name *isn't* Griselda; according to what I was christened it's Grisel—G, r, i, s, e, l—you can pronounce it like "gristle" or like "grizzle;" the latter, I believe, is the correct Scotch pronunciation.'

'I would rather call you "Griselle," which is, as I said before, a very pretty name in my opinion. Does Lady Craigdarroch call you "Grizzle"?''

'She doesn't dare to; she knows I shouldn't stand it!'

'Is she very much in awe of you?'

'H'm; not so much as I should wish—like her to be, else she wouldn't take me away directly I go back to the dancing-room, which she will do as it is.'

Corbet's face lengthened.

'Can't you persuade her to stay a little longer?'

'I very seldom try to persuade her. It doesn't answer.'

'Then suppose we don't go back into the room till the next dance is over.'

Miss Craigdarroch neither assented nor dissented. 'I dare say,' she said cheerfully, 'mother doesn't know how late it is.'

Lady Craigdarroch, on the contrary, was perfectly aware how late it was, and was standing with her eyes fixed on the ballroom door, impatient for her daughter's reappearance. She had left the room, her ladyship knew, some time before, and 'sitting-out' was an amusement she disapproved of. But when at last she caught sight of her daughter and her daughter's partner making their way through the crowd towards her her brows relaxed, and the tone in which she said, 'Griselle, my dear, we shall get to the Markhams so late,' had scarcely any asperity.

Not long after this Lady Craigdarroch's acquaintances realised, with no little surprise, that a young man named Corbet, whom 'no one had ever heard of,' had been invited to 'hang up his hat' in her ladyship's hall, or, to put it less colloquially, was received by her on a footing of intimacy. Lady Craigdarroch was distinctly chary of according a privilege of this kind, and what particular merit could have procured it for this young man? The thing was a mystery.

But not to Lady Craigdarroch's select circle of intimate lady friends, to each of whom she had confided, under seal of secrecy, the reason why she had 'taken up' Mr. Corbet. These ladies, if they did not all belong to the Order of the Blue Rose, all sympathised more or less in her ladyship's *cult* for the House of Stuart, and they were all impressed, more or less, by her description of Corbet's remorse for the crime of his ancestor, and the retribution which he believed to have fallen on him.

'You see, my dear,' Lady Craigdarroch would say, 'one feels one must do what one can for him, and what can one do except be kind to him in little ways? I know, of course, there are lots of coarse-minded people who, judging others by themselves, would simply laugh at him—that is what he says himself—but the opinion of that kind of person I always ignore altogether.' A speech which was felt by her friends to render certain suggestions they might otherwise have made impossible. One does not wish to be thought 'coarse-minded.'

'But, my dear,' one lady remarked, 'don't you think such an intimacy a little—dangerous? There are the girls to be considered.'

Lady Craigdarroch drew herself up. 'No one, I think, will accuse me of not considering my daughters, and anyone, I think, who sees Mr. Corbet in my house will agree with me that I need have no anxiety on that point. Lord Killiecrankie is generally there when he is, and very often Mr. Corbet, poor fellow, is very depressed and hardly talks at all. He likes to hear a little music and have some tea.'

Lord Killiecrankie, I may here remark, was a cousin of the late Sir Alexander's. He was a fine-looking young fellow in the hussars, tolerably well off, and obviously a most suitable match for Grisel Craigdarroch. A good-looking young man with a melancholy secret will generally find a soft spot in most feminine hearts. Miles Corbet was not in the same set as Lady Craigdarroch's friends, but he was gentlemanly, evidently possessed of some private means, and had an undeniable, if undesirable, ancestor, and Lady Craigdarroch's friends began to invite him to their houses, and, having done so, saw no reason to regret it.

Lady Craigdarroch had a high opinion of her *protégé*, all the higher because on one point at least he entirely refused to agree with her, and this was his worthiness to become a member of the Order of the Blue Rose. Corbet persistently maintained that he could not enter the order without stating his relationship to a regicide, a step which his pride would not allow him to take. The order possessed a member descended from one of the many gentlemen who hid his Majesty King Charles II. in a secret chamber; such descent conferred distinction; his was his misfortune, if not his fault, and at any rate he was not called upon to publish it abroad. In vain the good lady tried to prevail upon him to take a less morbid view of the matter, and was not without hopes of succeeding in course of time. She would have liked to be the Vice-Chancellor, who, when Corbet had duly promised to further the objects of the order, and had uttered the customary sentence, 'I will be faithful,' would answer solemnly that never-to-be-forgotten word, 'Remember.' But that being out of her reach (ladies being, unfortunately, held illegible for the office, though why they should be Lady Craigdarroch was unable to see), she contented herself by looking forward to the day when she would at last overcome his scruples.

'The smooth slipping weeks' went on, bringing nearer the time at which Lady Craigdarroch was in the habit of taking her family to Scotland. She considered it bad for the young people to remain in town later than the first of July. This particular



season she thought seriously of postponing her departure. Things had not turned out according to her hopes and expectations, and Grisel's flirtation (friendship, the young lady called it) with Lord Killiecrankie had not yet reached its legitimate *dénouement*, and she would have preferred to have been in a position to give out the engagement before leaving. But, not being without shrewdness, she was aware that her remaining in London longer than usual would make her friends say that she was afraid lest Killiecrankie might slip through her fingers. Besides, that young gentleman, when he could see Grisel every day, was naturally quite satisfied to let things remain as they were; her absence would, no doubt, convince him how necessary she was to his happiness.

On the twenty-eighth of June Lady Craigdarroch gave a dance. It had cost her much flurry and anxiety, but when the evening came she felt rewarded. Her dance was a brilliant success. Grisel all in white, with a bouquet of white heather, looked radiantly pretty, and was evidently looked upon by everybody as the future Lady Killiecrankie.

Corbet had seen less of the Craigdarrochs lately, as was natural in the rush of the season. He came late to their dance, and looked by no means radiant. His face was pale and sombre, and he had even more than usual the appearance of a man who has something on his mind.

Lady Craigdarroch received him with her accustomed cordiality, but to-night she had no time to be sympathetic; beside which her own affairs, or rather those of her daughter's, were just then absorbing her whole attention.

In spite of her social duties she had time to observe how often Grisel danced with Killiecrankie, and knew that they had sat out at least two dances. As the evening wore on she became more and more anxious. Killiecrankie was dancing for the second time with a very tall Miss McLowrie, whose father's whisky is justly celebrated. His manners, seldom quiet, were extremely exuberant, and Grisel was not in the ballroom, nor had Lady Craigdarroch seen her during the last half hour.

The band had begun playing the last extra, a waltz, before Miss Craigdarroch reappeared; but her mother's anxiety had been in a measure allayed before this, as she had heard that she was in the conservatory with Mr. Corbet.

Killiecrankie was not dancing, having succumbed to fatigue after executing an astonishing schottische with Miss McLowrie.



Only the fact of his having proposed to Grisel and been accepted could, Lady Craigdarroch felt, excuse his wild capers and war-whoops. Her impression that the decisive moment had come and gone was confirmed by her first glimpse of her daughter's face.

Grisel was dancing the last waltz with Mr. Corbet, and no couple so illustrated the poetry of motion. Lord Killiecrankie's dancing was prose, indeed, compared to it. Miss Craigdarroch was very pale; looking at her you would have supposed that this last dance was to her almost a solemn matter, unless, like Lady Craigdarroch, you had possessed the clue to her feelings.

The last waltz came to an end at last, and Lady Craigdarroch's guests bade farewell to their hostess while the band played 'Auld Lang Syne.' Poor Lady Craigdarroch, while shaking hands and returning thanks for congratulations, was wondering whether Killiecrankie, who was nowhere to be seen, could have left without wishing her good-bye.

Grisel and her late partner were standing not far off; Grisel was smiling, and she wished she could hear what she was saying. Could 'some kind fay' have gratified that wish her ladyship would have been a good deal puzzled.

Miss Craigdarroch was indeed smiling, but tears were not very far from her shining eager blue eyes. 'If I'm a rosebud, I've got plenty of thorns,' she said a little defiantly.

"A rosebud set with little wilful thorns;" a hackneyed quotation, but appropriate.

'I know a quotation worth two of that.'

'What is it?'

She leaned slightly towards him, and her eyes laughed at him through tears: 'I will be faithful!'

Never did the Chancellor of the Blue Rose respond so impressively as Corbet did: 'Remember!'

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### CHAPTER III.

THEY commenced operations with a mistake and followed it up with another, as Miss Craigdarroch, who had insisted on making them, was the first to confess. For once her intimate knowledge of Lady Craigdarroch had failed her.

Her first mistake lay in telling her mother that Lord Killiecrankie not only had not proposed but never would propose to her,

because she had conclusively shown him that he had no chance of being accepted.

It would have been far better policy to have let her ladyship suppose that that young gentleman had only been trifling with her affections.

Her second mistake was far more serious. Though her mother had been very much 'upset' by conduct which seemed to her absolutely incomprehensible, she persuaded Corbet to let her be the first to break to her that she had promised to become Mrs. Corbet.

On first hearing this astounding piece of intelligence Lady Craigdarroch showed such genuine incredulity that Grisel lost her temper (her third mistake) and asked indignantly: 'What is there about him to make my liking him so incredible? You know that he is nice, for you have often told me so; he is good-looking; better off than Killiecrankie, who is so extravagant he will be poor even when he has the estate; and he belongs to a good old family.'

Her last words were too much for Lady Craigdarroch.

'Grisel!' she exclaimed, her voice rising thin and high, 'you must be out of your senses! A good old family! Why, he is descended from a man who—who——'

'If you mean that I ought not to care for him because his grandfather five times removed helped to cut King Charles's head off—really, mother, that is carrying a joke too far!'

A joke! Lady Craigdarroch could hardly believe her ears.

'You don't know what you are saying. You can't have considered, you can't have reflected! Your children would be the great-grandchildren of a regicide!'

Miss Craigdarroch bit her lip. 'Really, mother, you are rather premature.'

'He has behaved disgracefully!' cried Lady Craigdarroch, realising suddenly how completely she had been blinded. 'I couldn't have believed it possible! I shall never trust anyone again.'

'Mother,' said Grisel with great dignity, 'I must ask you not to talk like that of the man whom I am going to marry.'

Before long, forgetting her dignity, she became pathetic, and even tearful. Lady Craigdarroch became tearful, too, but neither her own tears nor those of her daughter had the slightest effect on her adamant determination neither to allow the engagement nor to see her would-be son-in-law, and Grisel gave up

arguing or entreating, becoming convinced of the uselessness of both courses.

The younger members of the family left town with their governess on the 29th, and Lady Craigdarroch and her eldest daughter were to follow on the 1st of July.

Grisel was very active in helping with the preparations for departure, and treated her mother with a distant grave gentleness which sometimes made the latter feel furious, and sometimes made her feel like a criminal.

On the evening of the 30th Lady Craigdarroch, sitting alone in her dismantled drawing-room, received a note which she saw with surprise to be directed in Grisel's handwriting. She opened it hastily and read as follows :

‘ Mount Street, June 30, 6 P.M.

‘ DEAREST MOTHER,—I am afraid you will be very angry with us, but you will allow that I first did my very best to obtain your consent to our marriage. I failed, and as far as I could see, I might go on failing indefinitely. We simply couldn't bear the idea of being separated; we both know too well what that means, someone talks, the man gets jealous, the girl gets angry, and then there is some dreadful misunderstanding, and perhaps two lives spoilt. We couldn't risk it, and we were married this morning. Dearest mother, it was you who first made me realise how delightful he is. If you have ever been fond of me you will forgive me. —Your loving child,  
GRISEL.’

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#### CHAPTER IV.

AN elderly lady and gentleman sat opposite one another in a first-class compartment of a train which was speeding northward.

The elderly lady was Lady Craigdarroch, who just then was engaged in wondering who her *vis-à-vis* could be.

She felt sure that she had seen his plain, good-tempered, gentlemanly face before; probably she had met him somewhere and had forgotten it, and he was inwardly disgusted at her rudeness in not recognising him.

She peered at him curiously through her veil, but her eyes were so tired with crying that she saw him as if through a mist. She had left London firmly determined never to forgive her daughter or Miles Corbet. She was really more hurt than angered by their conduct, but a sense of injury may harden the heart as effectually as the most bitter wrath.

The elderly gentleman becoming aware of her persistent scrutiny, said politely: 'May I lend you this *Spectator*?'

And suddenly his identity dawned on her.

'Thank you,' she said; 'I think I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Vernon Harris; we met a few weeks ago at Lady Alice Robilliards—but I am so short-sighted. My name is Craigdarroch,' seeing her interlocutor still look blank—'Lady Craigdarroch.'

'Oh ah, yes, of course. I must apologise for not having known you. You are on your way to Scotland, Lady Craigdarroch?'

Inwardly he was regretting the rash impulse which had made him open a conversation.

His companion, on the contrary, was conscious of a pleasant excitement. Mr. Vernon Harris was the distinguished author of a History of England in the Seventeenth Century, which, according to the critics, was 'almost too carefully impartial,' but which had made Lady Craigdarroch almost weep with helpless indignation. She had detected in it, or so she believed, instances of gross unfairness, and here she found herself *tête-à-tête* with their author. Never could she hope to have again so good an opportunity of pointing them out to him. Another thought flashed across her mind, and she opened her eyes so wide that Mr. Harris, again meeting them, was disturbed by a vague apprehension.

Mr. Harris,' she began, and her voice trembled—'Mr. Harris, I have read your History of the Seventeenth Century, and there are two or three things which I should like to ask you.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Harris, looking by no means radiant at this announcement. 'Am I not right? I think I have heard that you belong to some Stuart Society?'

'I have the honour to be a member of the Order of the Blue Rose.'

'And of the United Jacobite Brotherhood?'

'Sir, the United Jacobite Brotherhood has nothing whatever to do with us. No one can accuse *us* of disloyalty to the reigning family. What I wish to ask you is this. Has it ever occurred to you to trace the fortunes or find out the fate of those fifty-three unhappy men who murdered the Martyr King?'

Mr. Harris had always suspected that people who could found a society for the glorification of the Stuart kings of England, must be *un peu toqué*, but his companion's words and manner made him doubt whether she was not more than *un peu toqué*, and he felt extremely uneasy.

He answered, however, with great courtesy and presence of mind: 'It so happens that it has occurred to me to try and do so, and I have found out that their fortunes were varied, as the fortunes of a number of persons usually are.'

Lady Craigdarroch made an impatient movement. 'Can you tell me anything about Miles Corbet?'

'Miles Corbet? Let me see. He died childless in—I am not sure about the date.'

'Childless!' It was a cry which might have been heard in the next carriage. Mr. Vernon Harris hastily grasped his umbrella.

'You are certain?' said Lady Craigdarroch, clinging to his coat-sleeve. 'You are sure that he had no children, that you are not confusing him with some other man?'

'Certain, quite certain,' said Mr. Harris soothingly. 'I am sure I can send you papers which will prove it to you convincingly, if you cannot trust my accuracy.'

Never in her life had Lady Craigdarroch been so anxious to trust the accuracy of an historian. She leant back in her seat; large tears were trickling down her cheeks, and she let them trickle.

Mr. Harris took advantage of her emotion to retire to the end of the carriage, where he read the *Spectator* upside down, till a little later she terrified him more than ever by pouring forth incoherent explanations mingled with rapturous thanks.

. . . . .

Two evenings later Mr. and Mrs. Corbet were sitting together in the comfortable sitting-room which the former rented in Mount Street. They had dined, and as the evening was a genuine English July evening, cold and rainy, they had lit a fire, which was now shedding its ruddy glow on Mrs. Corbet's curly yellow head.

'I really think your hair is spun gold,' said Corbet, stroking it. 'Shall I share the fate of Midas? You don't feel as if you were growing hard and cold, do you?'

'Quite the contrary,' answered Mrs. Corbet demurely. 'Bless me, dear boy, there is someone coming upstairs!'

A hasty stumbling step was ascending the staircase.

When the door of the room was thrown violently open Mrs. Corbet was standing on the hearthrug. Catching sight of a tall thin figure, wearing a mackintosh, pausing on the threshold, she

uttered a shrill cry, 'Mother!' and a moment later was in Lady Craigdarroch's arms.

At this crisis Corbet behaved in a manner which did credit to his self-control, since, unassisted, he prevented both his mother-in-law and his wife from going into hysterics.

The former was the first to recover herself. 'My dear children,' she said. 'My dear children!'

'Grisel!' said Corbet severely, for Grisel showed signs of interrupting Lady Craigdarroch by ill-timed caresses and fresh tears.

'My dear children, I bring you good news. Miles, it has been proved to me beyond a doubt that that old horror was *never* your great-grandfather! And, thanks to dear Mr. Harris, I can prove it.'

Mr. and Mrs. Corbet looked at one another in silence.

'You may be descended from a brother,' said her ladyship triumphantly, 'or perhaps it is altogether a mistake, and you are no relation; anyhow, my dear boy, you are not descended from a murderer.'

'My dear mother,' said Grisel impetuously, 'do you suppose I ever thought he was?' Then, this time unrestrained by her husband, she embraced her mother with an almost overwhelming vehemence.

'Dear, sweet child,' said Lady Craigdarroch, describing the scene to an intimate friend, 'she felt quite sure from the first that the man she fancied could not have such an ancestor; was it not touching?'

ELLERY ESDAILE.



## *Song.*

SO silently we anchor weighed,  
 Stole out into the foam ;  
 Mine eyes were on my helmsman stayed,  
 And all the world was home.

Now o'er the sea there is no path,  
 And no star in the sky,  
 And no more place that helmsman hath  
 Save in my memory.

Oh, best beloved ancient house—  
 Here in these far-off seas  
 The waves go singing like the boughs  
 Of your green chestnut trees.

I see them watching at the gate,  
 As striving to recall  
 A step that comes not, though they wait  
 Far through the evenfall.

For the winds blow infinitely wide  
 Of the home where I would sleep—  
 Shoreless and fathomless the tide  
 That hath me in its keep.

O fatal sea—O lost, lost shore,  
 Eternally remote—  
 O helmsman I may see no more,  
 How lonely is thy boat !

Yet on with memory I sail,  
 Still waiting for that day  
 When the clouds break, when the stars fail,  
 The shadows flee away.

MAY KENDALL.

## *A Famous Family.*

THE scene is a Kentish hop-field, and the immediate foreground is a large leaf just plucked from a vine in full vigour. The upper surface, dark green and glossy, looks dull and uninteresting enough. As it is turned over the sight which meets the eye may, without exaggeration, be described as extraordinary. At first sight there is some difficulty in realising exactly what it is that one is looking at. It appears to be a great swarm of grey-white units crowding every available atom of space. As, however, the eye gets familiar with the details little difficulty is experienced in localising the individuals. Every one of them, despite its small size, stands out clearly and distinctly. It is certainly a vast army, silent and feeding, pumping up the life juices of the hop and dreaming away an existence of motionless content which to us restless creatures passeth understanding. You wonder how many there are on the single leaf. Five thousand, ten thousand, perhaps? But there is no need to guess so wildly. The leaf is covered evenly; a few lines dividing and redividing again, and we have a section small enough to count on. It is the work of a moment and the total is reckoned up in rough. Twenty thousand at least! If you are a person of fine feelings (as of course you are) and not a mere brutal hop-grower, you hardly like to toss the leaf carelessly away; the pasture-ground, as you begin to realise it, of twenty thousand sentient creatures, each, it may be, with five senses, certainly and obviously with six legs, and a digestive apparatus complete.

The hops have climbed to the tops of the long poles and they stretch out their branches to each other in long hanging festoons overhead. It is all the growth of only a few weeks, though already in the long green lanes between the poles the sunlight is entangled in the hanging foliage till it comes through a subdued green, making the brown clods in the well-kept furrow underneath look yellow in the altered light. As the eye wanders over

the vines it begins to notice what did not attract it at first. The leaves about half-way up many of the plants have begun to turn brown. Some of those lower down are quite shrivelled up, others are in an intermediate stage, while some higher up, where the leaf was picked at which we have been looking, are only just beginning to appear out of health. At the end of one of the long vigorous shoots you pluck another of the very young leaves. It is just beginning to unfold. Very cunningly-contrived it is; the tender green tissue folded upon itself, like a lady's fan when closed. As the delicate fibres are stretched open a curious sight becomes exposed. The furrows are filled with a living mass. They are the same grey-white units which swarmed on the leaves below, but here they appear to be supplemented by others of a much larger size, and of a dark-green colour. These latter are the parents; they have come here to plant their innumerable offspring in a promising inheritance, amongst the succulent tissues of the expanding leaf. You pluck another leaf and another. It is the same everywhere; the whole of the plants are swarming with countless millions of the creatures. Ten days ago there was nothing here; now the hops are beyond human aid. All the promise of this vigorous life is doomed. The vines have got the blight; they are fast in the fatal grip of the hop-aphis.

The hop-aphis belongs to a family which has an imposing record. When the day arrives that fame is measured, not by the noise we make, but by the amount of solid print in which the index-maker laconically records our deeds, it will assuredly be one of the most famous in the world. To understand the extraordinary history of the aphis, and to learn at the same time something of the causes which have enabled it to become such a force in the world, it is perhaps well to begin at the point at which science first became interested in the curious habits of the family.

It is now about one hundred years since Bonnet, a French naturalist, caused something of a sensation in the scientific circles of the time by an account which he published of observations he had made of the habits and life-history of the aphis. The aphis family, it may be mentioned, though it includes a great number of species (those found in Great Britain alone numbering close on 200) has certain well-marked characteristics which are peculiar to itself. All the species, from the hop-aphis, of which we have been speaking, to the *Phylloxera vastatrix*, the representative of the family which devastates the vineyards of the Continent, have

certain habits which distinguish them as a clearly-defined group among insects. Bonnet commenced operations by isolating at birth a solitary aphid on its food plant. It grew rapidly and moulted four times in eight days, by which time it had almost reached its full size. Soon after this there happened what at that time was considered a very extraordinary thing. The aphid had attained maturity, but, instead of proceeding to take to itself a mate and make preparations for egg-laying, as all properly-constituted insects had hitherto been expected to do, it remained quietly feeding till the eleventh day, when it brought into the world a living duplicate of itself. It then went on producing rapidly, and at the end of twenty-one days it had given birth to ninety-five young. Bonnet then proceeded to isolate one of this second generation, and the same history was repeated, the second aphid bringing into the world in a short space of time ninety living young. Further experiments enabled Bonnet to observe this interesting history repeating itself for nineteen generations. It was found that at the end of the season these prolific generations came to an end, and fully-developed males and females were produced which mated. The female laid a few eggs in the ordinary way and these hatched out the following spring into individuals in which the strange cycle was begun over again.

Bonnet had observed nineteen generations. Subsequent observers proved that under suitable conditions this number might be greatly extended, but the original observation (since many times confirmed) has been quite sufficient to suggest food for reflection to science down to the present time. Professor Huxley once worked out a calculation which put what is but an incidental aspect of the question in a very striking light. Assuming each aphid to weigh the one-thousandth part of a grain, and a man to weigh 2,000,000 grains, the tenth brood alone of a single aphid would weigh as much as 500,000,000 of men, or more than the whole population of China.

This phenomenon of the female of the aphid family carrying on the species by herself for a number of generations by a process of budding has ever since possessed an absorbing interest for science. The questions which it raises are of fundamental importance in biology, and many of them are intimately associated with some of the most interesting problems still under discussion. What is the tendency of evolution here? Why have the aphides developed this curious method of carrying on the species? Above all, how comes it that Nature in this case consents

to deliberately set aside those strange imperative laws of reproduction with which we are so familiar throughout the higher forms of life? These are questions to which until recently no satisfactory answers were forthcoming. It is only within the last few years that the researches of one or two workers have enabled us to catch a glimpse for the first time of the nature of the explanation which science is likely to be able to give. It is one which promises to open up a chapter of no ordinary interest in the history of the evolution of life.

Let us see first what information we get from observing the life and curious habits of the aphid. Amid the quiet beauty of these Kentish hop-fields, where no sound comes now save the note of the linnet from the neighbouring copse, one might be tempted to think that there was no place for that fierce rivalry in which all nature's creatures are said to be continually engaged. Nevertheless, even here it is war *à outrance* on every side if one has only eyes to see it. If interest were measured by the tale of the dead and dying, no Indian jungle or human battle-field could compete with this quiet green lane between the hop-poles. One notices the glint of many wings in an open patch of sunshine between the leaves. The owners dart rapidly to and fro. Many of them are large insects with long thin bodies of a dark colour. Their motions are peculiar. They hover in and out between the leaves and are apparently earnestly bent on business of some kind. One of them alights on the back of a leaf, and you notice she has chosen one which is thickly crowded with aphides. She walks at first quietly and apparently aimlessly about amongst them; but a closer look reveals, from the motions of the antennæ, that she is busily engaged. Presently she comes to a spot where the insects cluster thickly in the expanding furrows of the leaf; she pauses, and the antennæ for a moment vibrate more rapidly; then, apparently satisfied, the motions cease, she bends round the long abdomen, deposits an egg and flies away. The aphides are unharmed and they have never so much as lifted their heads, but no dynamitard ever placed his bomb with more murderous design than that with which this innocent looking egg has been planted among them.

The insect which deposited it is one of many whose eggs hatch out into larvæ which devour the aphides by thousands. The leaves and stalks of the hops are swarming with these scavengers, and it is a sight to be remembered to see one of them at work. One green kind, the larva of a common species of fly (*Syrphidæ*) is



particularly abundant, and the individuals go to work in a business-like way, clearing the insects before them like the plague. The aphid is held in the strong jaws and rapidly sucked dry of its juices, the empty skin being immediately discarded for the next victim. Those large, black, active-looking creatures prowling among the leaves are the larvæ of the lady-bird. The air is full of the perfect insects flying about, and the vines and hop-poles are also crowded with them. These eat the aphides too, but they are busy with the cares of a fuller existence, and it is the hungry larvæ which spread the greatest devastation amongst them. They suck the juices of the aphides like the other larvæ, whisking the shrivelled remains aside one after the other as they go on feeding. So rapid is the destruction that, despite the stupendous rate at which the aphides multiply, these lady-bird larvæ will often clear the vines if their victims do not get too long a start of them.

There is also another type of insect-life here that one cannot help noticing. The air is full of diminutive black flies, which may also be seen on the leaves of the hops. If one of them is watched for a moment she may be seen apparently caressing the aphides with her curious beaded antennæ, not, indeed, like the benevolent ants, who come for their honey, but as if she were feeling the little creatures all over inquisitively. Presently the black, shining abdomen is bent quickly round, and you hardly catch sight of the sharp ovipositor as it is plunged into the back of the unresisting victim. These flies are one of many species of ichneumon insects which lay their eggs in the aphides. The larvæ slowly eat up the living bodies of their hosts, who are thus reserved for a worse fate than befalls those which are devoured at once by the other marauders. So the slaughter goes on. The hops are doomed, but they are being avenged, and we begin to realise something of the drastic methods by which even here Nature maintains the balance of power amongst her creatures.

There are one or two points in all this which call for notice. We have here the rapid and luxurious growth of the hops spreading out in a few weeks a great store of succulent food; we have the aphides multiplying in countless numbers to take advantage of it; and lastly we have the insects themselves the prey of innumerable enemies, against which they have absolutely no weapon of offence or defence save their own overwhelming numbers. So far, whatever else may be obscure, there can be little doubt of the advantage to the aphid of its power of multiplying rapidly.

The family history of the aphid is in many respects a curious



one. The order to which it belongs is of vast antiquity. The geologist—who nowadays keeps Nature's stud-book—turns back for the founder till it may be said almost literally that panting Time toils after him in vain. He probably would take us back to those gloomy primeval marshes where the mammals and birds were yet unknown, and the batrachians still held their place at the hub of creation. The aphis itself appears on the scene as early as the end of the Secondary Period. Most of the members of the order to which the aphis belongs live by sucking the juices of plants. Some of them, it is true, have, in the fulness of time, taken to quartering themselves on higher game, and now suck the blood of animals (including our own) instead of that of plants, but the aphis, and most of its near relatives, have stuck to the sweet simplicity of sap-drinking. Now, it is obvious that there were several things which in the course of time must have forced themselves on the attention of any species deliberately adopting this most easy-going of all methods of obtaining a livelihood. At the outset we must recognise that the career of vegetable blood-sucking has one great pull over nearly all others: the supply of food is easily obtained, and, at certain seasons, it is practically unlimited. These easy professions have, however, nearly always one drawback—they tend to become overcrowded. The aphis being a temperate-zone form, having summers and winters in its calendar, evidently attempted at some distant date to solve three difficult problems—viz. to overtake its food at the period at which there was an unlimited supply; to make provision for carrying on the species at the time when there was little or none; and, lastly, to maintain itself on the one hand against many competitors, and on the other against the hosts of enemies which were ready on every side to batten upon it. Like many another inferior species and race, the aphis met all the difficulties by one comprehensive device—it took to breeding; in this case on a gigantic scale and under extraordinary conditions.

But now we have only reached the crux of the subject. Of the advantage to the aphis of its wonderfully simple method of multiplying there can be no doubt. Through it the family has become a power in the world of the first magnitude. Bismarck's Pomeranian grenadier may be regarded as the highest offspring of the marriage of science and brute force, but the aphis can give him long odds as a destructive force. Even in our own day, one of the family, *Phylloxera vastatrix*, has drawn more milliards from France than the German army carried across the Rhine after the

war. The overwhelming advantage of being able to multiply to infinity in a short time which its method of reproduction gives the aphid there can be no gainsaying. But all this merely leads to the question which lies behind the whole subject. How did the aphid come to obtain this faculty from nature? If, by the simple act of dispensing with the ordinary roundabout method of reproduction, and carrying on the species by a process of budding, a puny and insignificant group rises thus into importance, why have not other orders and species gone and done likewise? How is it that we find them staggering along under the weight of a crushing burden which here appears to have been dispensed with to advantage?

In order to attempt to answer this question, let us see under what conditions parthenogenesis is found to occur elsewhere in life. It might, perhaps, occasion surprise to find at the outset that reproduction by budding, in the manner of the aphid, is not an uncommon occurrence amongst certain types of animal life. Beginning near the bottom of the scale, we find a curious state of things existing among some of the creatures where the sexes are first found separate.

There is a class of little creatures which are met with almost everywhere in water, whether fresh, salt, or stagnant. They are generally grouped together under the title of rotifers, a name given to them on account of the currents produced in the water by the rapid motion of the cilia or fine hairs situated near the mouth. This motion brings the food of the creature within reach, and it is so rapid as to produce the optical illusion of a rotatory wheel—hence the name. Many of these little animals are, of course, so small that their motions can only be studied under a microscope, but some of them attain to a comparatively large size. These rotifers represent a type of life which has probably played an important part in the evolution of life. Modern science is, by slow and patient effort, tracing the pedigree of the whole class of insects back to certain worm-like creatures which passed their lives in the water, where, indeed, the larvæ of many of the insects still significantly spend their infancy, and Fritz Müller and others take us back through the water-breathing crustacea to the simpler and less differentiated worm-like forms. Now, the rotifer's claim to fame and immortality does not arise simply from the fact that the water companies occasionally supply him to their victims for drinking purposes. He has some title to represent a great ancestral and early type of life which existed

before the higher forms were developed. The rotifers, as might be expected in the representatives of such an ancient and important class, are not mere lowly and undeveloped creatures like the infusorians with which they might be confused. Nothing of the kind; like their betters they have reached the luxury of eyes, jaws, muscles, a digestive apparatus, and a nervous system. Above all they have the sexes separate, male and female, like all the higher and ambitious forms of life.

But now comes the curious fact. Sex amongst the rotifers is evidently no recent development, but a very ancient institution. Strange to say, however, the rotifers in these latter times seem to have developed most revolutionary ideas on the subject. The first inkling of how matters stood was received when exploring naturalists, after long and diligent search, failed to find any males among certain of the species. At first the men of science, with becoming modesty, were inclined to attribute the blame to themselves rather than to the rotifers, and they lived in hope that the members of the missing sex would eventually turn up. But they did not. Down to the present in certain species no males have ever been found; the individuals are all females, and these alone are concerned in carrying on the species. Further investigations suggested the fate of the males. In some of the species they have been found, but under conditions which throw a melancholy light on their history. They are often quite degenerate, and here, as among the species where no males have been found, the aphis method of reproduction prevails. The female rotifers seem, in fact, to have discovered the secret of getting on entirely without their partners, and Nature, who, like Mrs. Gilpin, possesses the prevailing characteristic of a frugal mind, has apparently in such circumstances given the males notice to quit. They are, in fact, in full retreat; the male rotifer is within measurable distance of extinction.

It seems at first sight somewhat surprising to find a whole species which has attained to a state in which the male part of creation is being thus quietly wiped out. The aphides have not got so far as this. They certainly seem to regard the male sex as a nuisance to be borne with as little as possible, a kind of expensive luxury which the species can afford to produce only at intervals; but still they do produce males periodically, and so far they show no disposition to dispense with them altogether.

Rising now a step higher in the scale we find certain even of the advanced crustaceans tolerating the male creature only on the

most unequal terms. Amongst the little brine shrimps the males are very rare, and parthenogenesis prevails. A most suggestive example of another kind is that of the widely distributed little water-fleas, whose extraordinary methods of carrying on the species have, through the classic researches of Dr. August Weismann, attracted much attention of late. The female produces two kinds of eggs. During the summer there are produced great numbers of a small thin-shelled sort, which develop rapidly without fertilisation, and in a few days give rise to a new generation. These are known as summer eggs, and the generations follow each other so quickly that their native haunts are soon swarming with great numbers of the little creatures. At the approach of winter, however, a change occurs. Perfect males begin to appear, and at the same time the females begin to produce eggs of quite a different kind. These are known as winter, or resting, eggs; they are large, with a thick shell, capable of resisting cold and exposure, and, more important still, they will not develop without fertilisation. These are the eggs from which the colony starts again in the spring. Here, again, we have the male sex decidedly at a discount, but it still occupies a position slightly better than amongst the rotifers, and the conditions are somewhat analogous to those existing among the aphides.

Among the higher insects we meet many curious instances of a similar kind. With the bees the male insect is always developed from an unfertilised egg, and the eggs of the unmated queen develop of themselves, and always produce males. The creatures, virulent little socialists as they are, even take advantage of Nature in this respect, and deftly incorporate this peculiar endowment of the queen as one of the foundation stones of their communistic system. The females of the gall-wasps, the silk-moth, the death's-head moth, and of some of the smaller moths (e.g. *Solenobia*), have also been observed to be endowed with a faculty somewhat similar to that possessed by the queen bee.

The question which now presents itself with much force is: What is the goal to which Nature is travelling in those cases? Amongst the aphides and the water-fleas and others there can be no doubt as to the advantage which results to the species from the prevailing method of reproduction; but what is the general connection between all the phenomena and whither is evolution tending?

It is generally known nowadays that the whole fabric of Darwinism is built on a single fact—namely, that there exists

between all the individuals of a species slight variations, no two individuals being ever exactly alike in all respects. The story of evolution is simply the story of natural selection building up in the course of long ages the small variations in certain directions, and so slowly developing the more advantageous types. These variations are therefore all-important. Not only can there be no progress without them, but it is with their aid alone that a species is enabled to hold its own in the competition of life by continually adapting itself to surrounding conditions which are always changing. But now comes the question: Where do the variations come from; why do they arise? After a life-time of research Dr. Weismann has come to put forward a striking explanation of their origin and cause. Their production is, he says, the purpose which Nature is seeking to effect in the method of reproduction which we find to be the universal rule amongst all the higher forms of life. Nature's aim is to keep up this all-important supply of small variations by continually forming new combinations of the hereditary qualities of a whole species. The part which sex plays in the evolution of life is, therefore, a stupendous one. In the higher forms it is only amongst those species where the sexes are developed that progress is possible; these only are able to keep up the supply of variations, and so hold their own amid the competition of life by ever adapting themselves to the continually changing conditions of the rivalry in which they are always engaged. All the examples we have been considering are merely lapses towards an earlier and simpler form of reproduction which the winning species have long ago abandoned under stress of circumstances, the lapses themselves becoming rarer and rarer, and soon ceasing altogether as we rise in the scale of life.

We are now in sight of the explanation of the method of reproduction prevailing among the aphides. It is really a process of degeneration. Despite the temporary advantage obtained by the aphides in resorting to reproduction by budding, they have not, after all, with impunity dispensed with the ordinary method. All species carrying themselves on purely by parthenogenesis are simply on the down-grade towards extinction. Whatever advantage they may obtain by multiplying more rapidly is merely a temporary one; they are inexorably doomed in the future. They do not possess the faculty of making progress, the power of adapting themselves to a changing environment and of defending themselves against the changing modes of attack of their enemies.



But it may still be answered that amongst the aphides parthenogenesis has not been exclusively resorted to. The more expensive and circuitous method of reproduction prevailing elsewhere in life has been in their case only partially abandoned, and abandoned, as we have seen, to obtain the advantage of enormously increased fertility. Why, therefore, should not the species, by the intercalation of a stage in which fully developed males and females are produced, still continue to retain its position amongst its competitors? The answer is that the tendency to extinction remains. The aphides having already, to maintain their position, purchased greatly increased fertility by partially resorting to reproduction by budding, there is always the possibility of the species, when hard pressed, obtaining further increase of fertility simply by lengthening out the number of these easily-produced generations, and finally, by giving up the higher method of reproduction altogether. This last expedient, to which the rotifers seem to be resorting, would be, as Professor Weismann points out, the most extreme method by which a species might secure its continued existence. But it must sooner or later, in such circumstances, pay the last penalty in Nature's code—extinction.

Here, then, we have the explanation of this peculiar phase of life of which the aphides furnish one of the best-known examples. It is profoundly interesting to watch these bankrupt species desperately struggling, as it were, to maintain their footing among their competitors by living on their capital. They are unable to make ends meet in the ordinary way; they retain their position for the present, apparently with credit, but, like other bankrupts, by the fatal process of mortgaging their future.

BENJAMIN KIDD.



## *Sport in Virginia.*

IN the free and glorious republic of America, where most things are on a large scale, the term 'hunting' covers a deal of ground. It is by no means restricted to that 'untin'—the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt and with only 25 per cent. of its danger—of which Mr. Jorrocks tells his 'beloved 'earers' so many striking truths. 'Untin,' in Mr. Jorrocks's conception, is a term to be reserved for sport in its noblest phase—the pursuit of the animal which ordinary people call the 'fox,' but which, in the splendid imagery of the immortal grocer, figures under the poetic designation of 'the thief of the world.' Even so nearly allied a sport as hare-hunting he dismisses with scant courtesy, and the harriers with a speeding farewell kick and the ignominious sobriquet of 'currant-jelly dogs.' In English circles of less exclusiveness than those in which Mr. Jorrocks strews his aspirates 'untin' is, roughly, co-extensive with all field sports in which the Anglo-Saxon strives to overtake *feræ naturæ* by the speed of animals domesticated to his service; but in America 'hunting' expresses any field sport which means death by any methods—fair or foul, natural or mechanical—to any fur or feather. Grizzly bear shooting is hunting; snipe-shooting is hunting; butterfly-catching is hunting—'bug-hunting.' Of hunting, in the mouth of Mr. Jorrocks—that is, of 'untin'—the best imitation that America produces are the drag packs in Long Island. All the qualities of the 'sport of kings' are there, except 'the thief of the world' and his wiles; all the conditions of fox-hunting except the fox—'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark. 'The image of war,' with the '25 per cent. of its danger,' is there in the shape of very clean but very stiff and high posts and rails. And the 'ounds' are after Mr. Jorrocks's own heart. But the end and the outcome of the war and the danger is but the scented red herring of commerce.

In the Southern State of Virginia, where the old families scrupulously preserve English traditions—more English than the English—the breed of the Old World foxhound survives. He is of a type seldom seen now in English kennels. He is heavy in the jowl and ear, and his colours are black and hound-tan, with but little speckling of white, and the melody of his sonorous bass is splendid. He is chiefly used in the chase of a creature whose native cunning might fairly match the more sophisticated wisdom of 'the thief of the world' himself. The hound commonly bears the name of the animal to whose pursuit he is devoted: he is called a 'coon dog.' The full name of the creature is 'raccoon,' but he is never known but by the affectionate, familiar abbreviation of 'coon.'

It is a darkey abbreviation. There are no such economists of the Anglo-Saxon tongue as those imported children of the Dark Continent. Perpetually chattering, they express more in fewer syllables than any other of the many peoples who speak a language intended for English; for they clip the word whenever possible at either end. The opossum is familiarly called 'possum,' and resents it not. He shows no pride in his Hibernian prefix of race, though he is certainly of the first families in Virginia—those 'F.F.V.s,' as they are termed in gentle jest by Northern republicans, who lay no claim to such luxuries as grandfathers. Virginian masters, as in many similar cases, when talking to darkey servants use clipped English, like the darkies' own. The 'coon' is very near to the darkey's heart. The chase of him is essentially the darkey's sport, though the head huntsman and the owner of the 'coon dogs' is commonly a white man. Say 'Coon!' to a darkey, and he will show you a grin of teeth that nearly meets behind his head. It is like 'Rats!' to a terrier, or 'Balfour!' to a Home Ruler. He regards the 'coon' as his natural-born foe, and yet he loves him with that selfsame paradoxical spirit of ferocious affection which moves the bard of 'The Meynell' to sing of 'the thief of the world,' 'Although we would kill him we love him.'<sup>1</sup>

The chase of the 'coon' and 'possum' is a deed of darkness, for the quarry is of nocturnal habits. The meet is fixed

<sup>1</sup> This paradoxical affection seems planted by nature in the male breast. A sportsman of my acquaintance, aged two years and four months, being taught the use of a cartridge, how it was put in a gun and went Pop! Bang! at once grasped the situation. 'Shoot dear Bunny,' he said. His mother weakly suggesting, 'You would not like to shoot dear Bunny,' the sportsman without hesitation replied 'Ess.'—ED.

about 9 P.M. The first preparations are to borrow, if possible, a friend's small-clothes; failing that, to don your own worst; for the 'possum' and the 'coon' haunt sylvan recesses bristling with thorny undergrowth. Moreover the 'coon' will often lead the hunter into a creek, across a creek, up and down a creek, to any spot that his natural genius tells him will most baffle the noses of the 'coon dogs;' and this, his natural genius generally tells him, is ground of a quality suggestive of the real old original English Slough of Despond. The chase is followed preferably on foot, but frequently prone upon the face, when an unlucky bough of the undergrowth has tripped the feet.

The meet is in the heart of the solemn forest, where the hunter's lantern casts strange shadows. The pack is only some five or six strong. The katydids 'skreeking' in the locust trees alone break the silence, except when the darkies' irrepressible excitement bubbles over in chatter.

At length the signal is given by a 'whoop' that shocks the stillness of the night. The hounds plunge into the undergrowth, they dash among the dry leaves and crackling bushes; the hunters follow near them, down a foot track through the wood, now and again stopping to listen. The welcome sound of the 'coon dogs' music is heard. Human 'whoops' echo the canine chorus, and the chase goes merrily in the dark forest. Suddenly the chorus stops. A single bay is heard—a different note. 'They've run him to tree,' say the connoisseurs, and dash away towards the sound. The lantern's light reveals a hound baying and jumping up towards a tree, in which is nothing distinguishable. 'It's a 'possum; it's no 'coon,' the old hands say; for 'de ole 'coon' would have led 'de dogs' a longer chase than this.

A space is cleared. The hounds are hard held, while the axe is laid to the root of the tree, chip-chopping till down the tree comes with a crash, and in go the dogs, and with a snap and a snarl the 'possum's little ghost is gone to happier hunting grounds.

On again, and soon again a baying, and away goes the music through the wood and out over the snake-fence to the corn field, where the great shucks of the maize deluge the hunters with dew drippings. But on and on the chase holds to the marshy ground beside the creek, where soon a welcome baying proclaims the 'coon' gone to tree. It is a low alder. 'Ole man hunter' goes up and shakes away, till, in the light of the lantern, a dark

body falls with a thud. The dogs are at him. The 'coon' is on his back, all claws and fangs, fighting for dear life. There is etiquette in the hunting of the 'coon.' 'De dogs' and he must be allowed to settle their differences between themselves. To welt 'de ole 'coon' on the head with stick or axe is as horrid an outrage as to use the engines of Mr. Purdey against the thief of the Old English world.

The hounds are stanch, and they finish him; but his life is dearly bought. Canine attention and tongues are diverted, when the heat of battle is past, to sundry wounds and scratches—the signs manual of the 'coon. Then the hunter gives the war-whoop signal anew, and the hounds are keen and eager again for any quarry the woodland holds. And so it goes on the short summer night through; and, sleepless yet never sleepy, the darkey will straightway betake him to his daily toil.

Now this is the darkey sport *par excellence*, though many whites love it well. Perhaps it is a reminiscence of some wilder hunt in the native forests of Dahomey.

But Virginia has many another sport which the darkey does not share. There are pheasant-shooting, partridge-shooting, and wild-turkey-shooting; there is bat-shooting, and there is bull-frog-shooting.

The Virginian pheasant is much like an English partridge, but larger, and has his dwelling in the woods. The Virginian partridge has the same general manners and customs as his namesake in England. He lives in the fields, and the form of excitement he knows best is to be shot over pointers. But he is a dwarfed specimen of his tribe—scarcely larger than a quail. The wild turkeys dwell in the forest; and the hunter builds unto himself a 'blind,' to which he attracts the turkeys by an imitation of their call—or fails to attract them, if perchance he charm them not wisely, and, like our old friend Mrs. Bond, his 'Dilly, dilly' fall upon deaf ears. Or, in less sportsmanlike manner, the hunter will trap the turkey by building a leafy cage, into which leads a sylvan green tunnel, funnel-shaped, strewn with Indian corn, which the foolish birds pick grain by grain, strutting along till they find themselves within the cage, and the narrow path and strait gate by which they entered is the last by which it occurs to them to go out.

The bull-frog sits and booms beside a pond, and the hunter steals upon him unawares and shoots him as he croaks. His hind legs are like cold chicken.

The shooting of none of these would tax the skill of a Bogardus or a Carver. The sitting bull-frog, or the turkey that walketh in noonday—he is averse to flight—are marks that a British recruit might not despair of; but the bat that flieth by twilight is not such an innocent. He is not wild: quite the contrary; he sweeps past so close that he almost takes your hat off. But in his circlings and dartings he is swifter than the 'snipiest' of 'blue rocks;' for the Virginian bat is not the quaint little flitter-mouse of England. Virginia has cousins of the flitter-mouse, but them they distinguish by the name of 'leather-winged bats.' The bat that the Virginian shoots, often misses, but never fails to eat when shot, is a bird much like a goat-sucker, but of greyer plumage. He is a mosquito hawk—a relative of the whip-poor-will. On calm summer afternoons you will dimly see him in the high heavens, whirling about, like a swift, after his prey. As the sun sinks, the insect tribe flies nearer earth, and the bat comes circling down, hawking the insects, lower and lower, until, as darkness settles, he is scudding close over the face of the ground. Just before sunset he is within gun-range, in multitudes in the likely spots—that is, in insect-haunted places. And his twists and stops and dartings as, swallow-like, he pursues his prey, make him a subject of strong language to the unpractised sportsman. There is a point in his flight at which the skilled hand knows how to take him, but that point passed he is away and safe, for even could his pace be gauged, so as to admit of due 'holding ahead,' his turns are so rapid as to defeat the calculation. Should he be flying over high, a hat, which a darkey will delight to throw up, will bring him swooping down to examine it—wherein we perhaps see light on that hard passage of nursery classics, 'Bat, bat, come under my hat.' He is almost all wings and head; his body is tiny. But no jack snipe or golden plover is so succulent as this little fly-catching hawk, which bears the unsavoury name of bat.

Ortolans, soras, and snipe in the marshes make up a very satisfactory mixed bag for the sportsman, the more so that 'snipe,' like 'hunting,' covers much ground in America, viz. all 'wadens,' from sandpiper to curlew.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.



## *His Grace.*

BY W. E. NORRIS.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### THE DOWNHILL ROAD.

I WROTE to Nora, and in the course of a few days had a reply from her to the effect that she had received Lady Deverell's invitation and intended to accept it. 'I am sure you are quite right to remain in Berkeley Square,' she told me; 'and, for the reason that you know of, it wouldn't be possible for me to join you there. So I ought to be, and I am, very grateful to Lady Deverell for having helped me out of a difficulty. I don't exactly expect to enjoy myself with her, but I couldn't very well have stayed on here for an indefinite length of time without you, and I hope I am not quite such an idiot as you naturally take me for. I mean, I am still capable of being amused and of conducting myself properly in fashionable society.'

Fortified by these assurances, I proceeded to break the news to Lady Charles Gascoigne, who, as I had anticipated would be the case, was not best pleased.

'I thought,' said she, 'it was an understood thing that your sister was to come to us. I must confess that I am surprised at her preferring to place herself under the wing of that horrid old cat, who doesn't really know anybody, and who won't be able to take her to the best houses.'

I humbly submitted that winged cats are *rare aves*, and that, if Lady Deverell belonged to that species, she might manage to achieve higher social flights than it had hitherto been worth her while to attempt. 'You see,' I remarked, 'she is now in charge of an ambitious niece who will probably find means of admittance into the best houses. Besides, Nora is under obligations to her



which can't be forgotten or set aside. I am sure you will admit that as readily as you will admit that one isn't always free to consult one's personal inclinations.'

Lady Charles was too good-natured or, it may be, too indifferent to quarrel with us; but Hurstbourne, on being informed of the arrangement which had been made with my sanction, astonished me by the vehemence of his protestations against it.

'I tell you frankly, Martyn,' said he, 'that I call it deuced unfriendly. If your sister doesn't care to come and stay with us, well and good; that is a question for her to decide according to her taste, and I wouldn't for the world urge her to enter this pandemonium against her wish. But, since it seems that she does want to see what a London season is like, I really think she might have established herself somewhere else than in the enemy's camp.'

'Why will you persist in calling it the "enemy's camp"?' I asked. 'What is the use of regarding people as enemies who haven't injured you, and who, as far as I am aware, have no intention of injuring you? Lady Deverell is upon visiting terms with your mother, you know.'

Indeed, I had ascertained that a sort of ill-tempered treaty of peace had been concluded between these two ladies, and that they shook hands when they met, although they would doubtless have preferred to scratch out one another's eyes.

'Oh, it isn't that,' returned Hurstbourne; 'I don't care a button whether old Deverell loves us or hates us, and she doesn't make much disguise of her hatred. I only call her "the enemy" because she is hand and glove with Paul Gascoigne, who is our enemy, if ever we had one. Moreover, I can't see why you should be so eager to thrust your sister into the degraded mob which goes by the name of London society; she would be a great deal better off and a great deal happier down in the country, where I wish to Heaven I was! However, I suppose neither you nor she will be deterred by anything that I can say.'

I answered that I had no fear of my sister's being contaminated, but that I should sincerely rejoice if he would lend the force of example to his admirable precepts by quitting a society which he professed to despise, and which was evidently becoming far too expensive for him. Thereupon he frowned and grunted and went away. It was easy enough to put the poor fellow to silence by alluding to his pecuniary embarrassments, and it was not very generous of me to adopt that method with him; all I can

plead is that it was necessary to shut him up somehow or other.

I went to meet Nora at the King's Cross Station on her arrival, and drove with her to Lady Deverell's house in Upper Grosvenor Street. She seemed to be in better health and spirits than when I had parted from her, and she laughed as she implored me not to pull such a long face.

'I really am not going to die, Phil,' said she; 'my disease isn't a mortal one, as everybody is aware, and I shall be convalescent before you know where you are. I have brought a large supply of tonics with me in the shape of good resolutions, and I dare say Lady Deverell will kindly provide others in the shape of respectable, marriageable gentlemen. So, if you please, we will treat by-gones as by-gones henceforth and for ever.'

'Very well,' I answered, for in truth that appeared to me to be our wisest plan; 'but the respectable, marriageable gentlemen aren't by-gones.'

'Only one of them. The others belong to the future, and when they belong to the present we will discuss them as much as you like. Not that we shall have much to discuss; because, if they are marriageable and respectable, nothing more will be required of them.'

'Something more will be required of them by me,' I remarked. 'I don't suppose you mean what you say, Nora; but if by any chance you did you would be rather inconsequent, wouldn't you? Why did you break off your engagement to Mr. Burgess, pray?'

'Well—because he was Mr. Burgess. Some people are impossible; others are perfectly possible, though they may not be the precise embodiment of one's romantic dreams. I know what you are thinking; but you are mistaken. I am not going to accept the first man who asks me out of pique, or in order to punish somebody to whom that would be no punishment at all; only it is obvious that I must either marry or become a burden and a nuisance to my nearest male relative. Consequently, I have made up my mind to marry, and consequently I am now on my way to stay with Lady Deverell.'

'Then,' I returned, 'all I can say is that I hope nobody will ask you.'

'If nobody does, there will still remain the Post Office. Now let us talk about something else. Have you been to see a publisher yet? And if not, why not?'

As a matter of fact I had interviewed a publisher, and a very polite as well as a very discouraging gentleman I had found him. But that is neither here nor there. It was of infinitely greater importance to me than all the literary fame or profit in the world that my sister should be restrained from committing some rash action, and I could not feel as sure as I should have liked to feel that she would be restrained by Lady Deverell, to whose care I presently had the honour of confiding her. I was puzzled by the old lady's amiability; I could not understand her bland acquiescence in the dismissal of her pet parson, nor was I able to arrive at any comprehension of her motives for showing us so much kindness. A desire on her part to spite Lady Charles hardly seemed to be a sufficient explanation of them.

'Of course you will want to see as much as you can of your sister,' she said very graciously, 'and we are not far from Berkeley Square, you know. One of the servants will always be available to take her round there, if you would rather she didn't walk through the streets alone.'

It seemed unlikely that Nora would wish to pay frequent visits to Berkeley Square, but it was certainly incumbent upon her to pay a speedy visit to Lady Charles Gascoigne, and I suggested that she might do so about half-past five on the following afternoon, 'when,' I was careful to add, for my sister's benefit, 'you may count upon finding Lady Charles at home and all by herself. That is to say that you will probably find me with her, because I shall make a point of being there; but Hurstbourne seldom shows his face before the dinner hour.'

This was a strictly truthful assertion, though Hurstbourne saw fit to falsify it. I mentioned in the course of the ensuing day that Nora would be coming about tea-time, and I suppose he must have taken note of my words; for no sooner had she arrived, and been embraced and scolded for her breach of faith with a lady whose earnest wish it had been to have the pleasure of introducing her into the highest circles, than in he walked.

'I have a crow to pluck with you, Miss Nora,' he made haste to announce. 'I should like to know what you mean by turning your back upon us and going over to the enemy. Your brother won't allow that Lady Deverell is the enemy; but you aren't such an old humbug as he is, and I'm sure you won't pretend to think that she is a friend of ours. So now, perhaps, you'll kindly explain yourself.'

I was thankful to perceive that Nora's emotions were well

under control. She made much the same excuse as I had already made to Lady Charles on her behalf, and did not treat his remonstrances seriously. It may have been painful to her to meet him and talk with him, but she did not look as though she were in pain, and after a time I felt able to relax my vigilant observation of her words and ways. When we had finished our tea, Hurstbourne and she retired into the back drawing-room together, upon I forget what pretext, while Lady Charles entertained me with a protracted description of a garden-party at which she had been present, and at which she appeared to have met quite a galaxy of celebrities.

'I had a long chat with his Royal Highness,' the poor old thing told me with irrepressible glee, 'and he was as simple and natural as possible—just like any ordinary person. He said he couldn't think how it was that he had never met me before. His Grace is a great deal in that set now, you know.'

I had not the heart to distress her by saying that his Grace's participation in the diversions of that set was likely to be a brief one. I allowed her to prattle on, and did not contradict her when she declared that a Duke of Hurstbourne possessed almost a prescriptive right to some place connected with the royal household.

'At present,' she remarked, 'all the appointments that he could accept are filled up, and the Tories are naturally reluctant to bestow any honour upon the head of one of the historic Whig houses; but I think they will find, when a vacancy does occur, that his claims are too strong to be resisted.'

The head of the historic Whig house presently emerged from his retreat in the back drawing-room to inform us that Miss Martyn said she must be off, and that he proposed to see her home. Miss Martyn, however, declined his proffered escort, and, as it appeared that Lady Deverell's maid was waiting for her in the hall, he had to admit that she stood in need of no additional protection.

'I shall see you again before long, I hope,' said he, as he shook hands with Nora at the foot of the stairs; 'meanwhile, I'll endeavour to lay your good advice to heart. You won't go very far wrong, though, if you bestow an occasional thought upon mine.'

'Yours wasn't much to the point,' observed Nora; 'mine was. Good evening.'

It wasn't within the range of my capacities to surmise what

he had been counselling her to do and avoid ; but, as I felt somewhat curious to learn the nature of her exhortations to him, I made so bold as to interrogate him upon the subject.

‘My dear fellow,’ he answered, ‘your sister is almost as wise as you are—which is saying a good deal. She sees what you see, and what lots of people, who aren’t as wise as either of you, see too. What she doesn’t see, and what I can’t explain to her, is that it’s too late for me to make a fresh start now. The flag’s down, we’re all off, and I’ve got to ride the race out, whether I win or whether I come a howling cropper. I don’t say that the stakes were worth entering for ; I daresay they weren’t, and I daresay I shouldn’t go in for them a second time ; but what’s the use of talking about that at this time of day ? I must do the best I can ; and I mean beating Paul Gascoigne, if it’s in any way possible to beat him. I don’t mind telling you that much.’

‘In what way is it possible to beat him ?’ I inquired. ‘Not in politics, not in ostentation, certainly not upon the turf, with which he has nothing to do. Would you call it beating him to bind yourself for life to a woman who will hate you, unless you can allow her an exorbitant sum in the shape of pin-money, and who, if you would only leave her alone, would make him quite satisfactorily miserable for the rest of his days ?’

Hurstbourne seemed to think this an excellent joke, for he laughed loud and long. ‘I never knew such a confirmed woman-hater as you are, Martyn,’ said he ; ‘I don’t believe you think there’s a decent woman in the world, unless it’s your sister. Miss St. George is about as good as they make them—in an ordinary way of speaking. Besides, I haven’t asked her to marry me yet ; and I don’t see why you should take it for granted that she will jump down my throat if I ever do.’

I by no means took that for granted ; on the contrary, I believed Miss St. George to be far too wide awake to unite her fortunes with those of a man who had hopelessly compromised his own. What I did take for granted was that she would end by marrying Paul Gascoigne, though it seemed likely enough that she would amuse herself with Hurstbourne during the season—perhaps also utilise him as a stalking-horse.

It may be that, as time went on, I should in some degree have modified my ideas respecting her, had I seen her and Hurstbourne together more frequently than I did. Afterwards I heard from many people that her conduct had placed the fact of her being deeply smitten with him almost beyond a doubt, and indeed I



suppose that the coldest and most calculating of women is not wholly exempt from the passions of love and jealousy. Miss St. George—so I was subsequently informed—soon became violently jealous of my sister, who, of course, accompanied her and Lady Deverell to the houses which Hurstbourne was in the habit of frequenting, and whose intimacy with the duke was fostered and encouraged in every way by her chaperon. Mr. Gascoigne, meanwhile, was not less violently jealous of his cousin; so that, altogether, it must have been an amusing little comedy for those who were not personally interested in it to watch. I, myself, did not watch it, because I was only invited to a very few entertainments, and declined most of the few invitations that I did receive. Neither Hurstbourne nor Lady Charles told me much about their social doings, while Nora was only careful to assure me that she was enjoying herself. She was a good deal admired, I heard.

Hurstbourne lost a considerable sum over the Derby; somehow or other, he always managed to lose, and how he managed to pay I hardly knew. As far as I could see, it was only by means of most undesirable and costly devices that we were able to meet the current expenses of two large establishments. But it was useless to remonstrate with him, because he was possessed by the gambler's spirit, and clung to the gambler's last forlorn hope of setting himself straight by one brilliant and successful stroke. My poor dear Hurstbourne was and is one of the best fellows in England, and, like so many of the best fellows in England, he was bent upon committing moral suicide. I could not save him, though I was thoroughly ashamed of my ineptitude—if there was any consolation in that.

I need scarcely say that he had made arrangements for being present at every event of the Ascot meeting, and if these did not include the hire of a house in the neighbourhood of the course, that was only because I resolutely refused to provide him with the necessary funds. However, I could not prevent him from hiring a box, and I gathered that he intended the box to be tenanted not only by his mother, but by Lady Deverell and the two charming young ladies whose movements were supposed to be under Lady Deverell's control. It was with no little chagrin that he informed me one evening of the disappointment inflicted upon him by the rigid old chaperon in question.

'She says she don't approve of racing, and her conscience won't allow her to take her niece to a race course,' he grunted.



'Did you ever hear such rubbish! I told her she needn't come unless she liked, because my mother would look after Miss St. George just as well as she could; but she wouldn't give in. Only she said she wasn't entitled to dictate to your sister; so I hope Miss Nora will join us. Miss Nora is such a good sportswoman that she's sure to enjoy herself ever so much more than we poor devils, who can't always afford to wish for the victory of the best horse, can expect to do. Besides, between you and me, I shouldn't be sorry to get her out of this hurly-burly for a bit. You choose to shut yourself up, and you don't see what's going on; but I tell you I don't half like the way in which some of these fellows are running after your sister. Old fellows, too, a good many of them. And she's inexperienced, you know, and there's nobody to give her a hint or a caution, except that worldly-religious dowager. Ah, my dear Martyn, what a dog-hole of a world this is, and what asses we all are to live in the midst of it, when we might have lived outside it and been healthy and happy and jolly!'

I was not much surprised when Nora declined to avail herself of the somewhat inadequate loophole of escape from the fashionable world offered to her by a visit to Ascot. She said that, although she might not be under Lady Deverell's orders, she was living in Lady Deverell's house and ought to respect the prejudices of her temporary guardian, which sounded reasonable enough. Lady Charles went down on the Tuesday and Friday, and Hurstbourne dragged me with him, *faute de mieux*, on the other days. It was a disastrous business from start to finish, and when the meeting was at an end he frankly confessed to me that matters were beginning to look devilish serious.

'They began to look devilish serious some time ago,' I remarked with a sigh.

'H'm! I suppose they did; there's some comfort in that. Well, I may have better luck, and I think I shall, at Sandown, where I'm running a couple of my own horses. If that doesn't come off—but "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Did you see Paul Gascoigne swaggering about in the enclosure on Thursday?'

'No,' I answered; 'I didn't know that he was a patron of the turf.'

'He a patron of the turf! Rather not! I suppose he went down partly because he thought it was the proper thing to show himself at Ascot on the cup-day, and partly because he hoped to witness my discomfiture. He wasn't disappointed there; but he

hasn't bowled me out yet, I can tell him. I wish I knew what he meant by those everlasting insinuations of his that one can't take hold of. I'm pretty sure that he has got hold of some story, true or false, about my father; but if he holds a trump-card why doesn't he play it?'

'Perhaps,' I suggested, 'he is waiting to see what card you mean to play. My belief is that he won't trouble you if only you won't interfere between him and Miss St. George; and it seems to me that you might oblige him to that extent without any great personal suffering or loss. Would you mind telling me one thing, Hurstbourne: are you really in love with Miss St. George?'

'My dear old Martyn,' answered Hurstbourne, 'I don't mind telling you anything in reason, and nothing that you could say to me would make me feel in the least bit huffy with you, but—I put it to you now, as a man and a brother—don't you think that is rather an impertinent question?'

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### NONE OF MY BUSINESS.

It is generally accounted a creditable thing in any man that he should be a good loser, and the self-command which enables its possessor to meet disaster with a composed smile is, no doubt, a quality which deserves some admiration; still, I must say that it was not a little provoking to a sober, commonplace person like myself to see my best friend diligently and cheerfully pounding his head against a brick wall. The wall was so evidently harder than his head that it was difficult to understand where the fun of the encounter came in, and I couldn't help saying as much to him.

'It's all very fine,' I remarked, 'to refrain from crying when you are hurt, but I really don't see why you should laugh about it.'

'I laugh, my dear boy,' he returned, 'because I am not beat yet. When I am, we'll sit down on the floor, side by side, and stuff our fists into our eyes, if that will relieve your overcharged feelings; for the present it won't do either you or me any harm to anticipate a victory at Sandown.'

This was a few days after Ascot, Things had come to such a

pass that no victory, at Sandown or elsewhere, was likely to set him upon his legs again ; but perhaps, when a condemned man has started for the scaffold, it is a matter of small consequence whether he exhibits an edifying dejection or disappoints spectators by looking as if he didn't care. As for me, I perceived that my functions must soon come to an end. My daily routine work had ceased to possess any interest for me, now that the saving of a few pounds here and there could not affect the ultimate result one way or the other. I dare say that was why I hurried through it on that particular morning and, for no reason except that I did not know what else to do with myself, strolled off to Hyde Park.

I have always abhorred London, and it has always been incomprehensible to me that people who might be breathing fresh country air should deliberately choose to spend the best part of the summer in that thickly-populated desert of bricks and pavement ; but I don't wonder that the poor deluded creatures should be thankful for such an apology for green leaves and such an imitation of what flower-beds ought to look like as the Park can afford them, and to my mind they look rather better and happier there than they do by candle-light. That is, the men and a few of the women look better. The majority of the latter have, of course, seen fit in these days to adopt a species of complexion which is ill fitted to cope with the warm glow of a sunny June morning. I was wandering along, taking half-conscious notes of the passers-by as I went, and inwardly wondering who could have been the first extraordinary individual to suggest that mauve is a becoming colour to lay thickly upon human cheeks and chins, when I caught sight of Hurstbourne riding with Miss St. George. There was a groom behind them—Lady Deverell's groom, I presumed, since he did not wear the Gascoigne livery—but they were otherwise unaccompanied and unattended, which seemed rather imprudent on their part, unless they wanted to be talked about. But very likely one of them did, while the other didn't mind. A man with whom I was slightly acquainted took me by the elbow before I had ceased to gaze at their backs and said :

'Does that really mean business? You ought to know.'

'Ought I?' I answered. 'Well, I don't. It's none of *my* business, anyhow.'

'Oh, but I thought you were acting as a sort of male nurse to the duke. It's too bad of you if you aren't, for nobody stands in

greater need of a nurse than that misguided young man does. To live at the rate of about three times your income is silly enough, but you may take my word for it that that isn't half so silly as marrying Miss St. George. I know, because my sister was at school with her, and the girl is mother of the woman, as Shakespeare, or some other equally sharp-witted, old quilldriver, observes. Miss St. George has no money, precious little brains and a beastly temper. If you have any influence over that unlucky duke of yours it is your duty to exert it and get him to drop this game, whatever other games that he doesn't understand he may insist upon playing.'

'I have no influence over him to speak of,' I replied rather crossly, 'and I think Miss St. George has brains enough to refuse a man who is spending three times his income—supposing Hurstbourne to be such a man. Added to which, Miss St. George has a vigilant and competent aunt.'

Then I turned and walked away, not caring to listen to any more remarks of the above description. I walked straight to the house of Miss St. George's aunt; not because I wanted to see that lady, but because I did rather want to see Nora, to whom I had something to say. The chances were that before the autumn I should find myself free and unemployed; she also would, I hoped, be similarly situated, and it seemed to me that the time had nearly come for us to make some arrangement respecting the future.

Miss Martyn was at home, I was told, on reaching Upper Grosvenor Street, and very glad Miss Martyn was to see me. So, at least, she said, though she might have given a more flattering reason for her gladness.

'I was just wondering how I could manage to get a word with you, Phil,' she began. 'I want you to tell me whether all these things that people are saying are true. I can't ask anybody else, because I don't like to appear inquisitive; besides, I suppose all they could do would be to repeat hearsay. But *you* must know whether it is a fact or not that he has lost such enormous sums of late.'

I did not think it worth while to waste time and breath by inquiring who 'he' might be. 'It is a fact,' I replied, 'that he lost a good deal of money at Ascot. I can't tell you how much, and I don't know that it particularly signifies. It is just wildly possible that before the end of the racing season he may recoup himself for his losses, but I have given up all hope that he will

ever consent to square his expenditure with his revenue ; so, since the breakdown must inevitably occur sooner or later, it may as well come in a few months as next year or the year after. For several reasons, in fact, the sooner it comes the better I shall be pleased. The sooner it comes the more likelihood there will be of our saving enough out of the wreck for him to live upon, though not enough, I trust, to tempt Miss St. George, with whom I saw him riding in Rotten Row just now.'

Poor Nora looked very grave at this. 'Was he riding with her?' she asked. 'If Lady Deverell hears of that she will be furious. As it was, there was very nearly a quarrel at breakfast time because Miss St. George insisted upon going out with the groom, and it did seem odd that she should be so determined to do what she had never cared to do before. They must have been seen together, of course.'

'Oh, they must have been seen together,' I agreed. 'They must have been seen by several hundreds, not to say thousands, of persons besides your humble servant. But that is rather more Miss St. George's look-out than yours or mine, isn't it?'

Nora made no immediate reply. She had received me in a small room—so small that it ought, perhaps, rather to be described as a recess of the drawing-room, from which it was separated by looped-up curtains and by one of those perforated cedar-wood screens wherewith the army of occupation in Egypt has flooded the abodes of its friends at home. While we were talking she had been arranging cut flowers in a multitude of bowls and specimen-glasses, in preparation, I suppose, for a dinner-party, and she silently pursued this employment for some time before she said :

'I am afraid you will think I am jealous of Miss St. George, Phil, but you will be mistaken if you do think so. I have quite got over my—my—trouble now, and it isn't on that account—of course it *couldn't* be—that I wish we could save him from her.'

'She will save him and herself at one and the same time,' I answered. 'It will be a case of *sauve qui peut* before long, and, unless I am very much mistaken in the young lady, she won't be slow to join in the general flight.'

'You say that,' observed Nora, 'because you neither understand her nor—nor the whole position of affairs. I don't believe she cared a bit for him when she was at Lavenham. She may have thought there was no harm in having a second string to her bow

or, perhaps, she may have been flattered by his admiration. But I am certain that she does care for him now; and it is almost entirely owing to Lady Deverell's mismanagement that she does.'

'If she cares for him enough to marry him upon a mere pittance she is entitled to our respectful sympathy,' said I; 'but I venture to doubt whether her aunt will be guilty of such gross mismanagement as to let her incur a sacrifice of that heroic description.'

'I am afraid she is foolish enough to marry him,' answered Nora. 'I am sure she doesn't care for him enough to put up with any privations for his sake, and—she isn't at all afraid of her aunt. You won't understand unless I tell you all about it, and even when I have told you, the chances are that you won't believe the truth. However, here it is for you in all its nakedness. Lady Deverell, of course, has wanted all along to make up a match between her niece and Mr. Gascoigne; that much you must have seen for yourself. After a time she became alarmed by the duke's attentions, so she sent for me. Perhaps you didn't trace any connection between cause and effect there.'

I confessed that I had failed to do so, and Nora went on:

'So did I until the scheme was made too apparent to mislead an infant. The duke was supposed to have been more or less captivated by my charms down in the country—such a thing wasn't impossible, although, as you know, it didn't actually occur—and it was hoped that my sudden appearance in London would produce a certain effect upon him. The queer part of the business is that, instead of having produced that effect upon him, it has produced a rather startling effect upon somebody else. Naturally he has talked and danced a good deal with me—we were always good friends, you know—and the consequence has been that his flirtation with Miss St. George has become a serious love affair. It was serious on his side from the first, I suppose, and now it is serious on hers. If, as you say, and as everybody says, he is upon the brink of ruin, his friends ought to do all they can to prevent him making ruin more ruinous than there is any need for it to be by sharing it with Miss St. George. Don't you think so?'

'Upon my word, I don't know,' I replied rather snappishly. 'Hurstbourne isn't the only person in the world who interests me, and, as I told you before, I have great confidence in Miss St. George's distaste for heroic sacrifices. I may be wrong, but what



strikes me most forcibly in all this is that I have some little right to resent your having been made a cat's-paw of. Do you yourself feel no sort of resentment, may I ask ?'

'That isn't the question,' said Nora. 'Well, since you ask me, I may as well admit that I do. The position is not a very dignified nor a very agreeable one, and I haven't yet told you the worst of it—the worst, I mean, so far as I am concerned. All's fair in love and in war, and I don't very much wonder that when the duke saw, as he couldn't help seeing, how things were, he should have taken advantage of his opportunities. He might have remembered that some trifle of consideration was due to me, but then, to be sure, he wasn't aware of my susceptibility. To speak plainly, he has chosen to enrage Miss St. George of late by a rather conspicuous pretence of devotion to me. Well, it suited his purpose to make believe, and I forgive him, though I can't say that my personal affection for him has been increased by his conduct. Still I like him well enough to wish to do him a good turn if I can, and that is why I was anxious to hold a consultation with you.'

'I also was anxious to hold a consultation with you,' I answered, 'but not about Hurstbourne. Let him go to the—well, let us say to the dogs, since he seems to have set his heart upon arriving at that destination. I have done all I could for him; it is high time that I began trying to do something for my sister. And a man who has used my sister as he has used you really mustn't expect me to care particularly whether he and Miss St. George and the whole lot of them together go to the dogs or not.'

'Nevertheless, you do care,' remarked Nora quietly.

'Very well, I do care, if you will have it so. But I care a great deal more for you than I do for him, and there's nothing discreditable in that statement, I hope.'

Then I proceeded to unfold my plans. I said I had resolved to resign my present post, and that, even if I wished to retain it, I should not be able to do so much longer, because Hurstbourne's affairs must soon be placed in the hands of trustees. I proposed to take a small house somewhere on the outskirts of London, while looking about for some fresh field in which to employ my energies, and I added that Nora would have to make her home with me until she married. I went on to state that I did not ask her consent to this arrangement, seeing that I held myself justified in issuing commands upon the point, and she seemed to be much amused by the peremptory tone in which I informed her that I

should permit no matrimonial alliance on her part save one of affection.

'Poor old Phil,' she said; 'how do you suppose that you can prevent me from accepting the first benevolent old gentleman who asks me? Two of them have already honoured me by offers. I seem destined to captivate elderly admirers.'

'But you have refused them?' I said apprehensively.

'Oh yes, I have refused them both—more shame for me! Nothing is so immoral or so deteriorating as to make resolutions and then break them for want of a pinch of courage. But never mind me just now; my prospects can be discussed any day during the next two or three months, and so can yours. We have no time to lose, though, if we want to preserve the duke from—'

Her sentence was interrupted by the abrupt throwing open of the drawing-room door and the entrance of two persons who were apparently in the midst of a heated altercation. Through the apertures of the carved screen I could see Miss St. George in her riding-habit and the angry face of Lady Deverell, but neither of the ladies saw me, otherwise I am sure that the elder would not have said in a loud clear voice:

'It is nonsense to pretend that you have not deceived me, Leila, because you now admit having met him. If you had told me before you started that you were going out on purpose to meet him, you might claim to have behaved honestly.'

'Only then you wouldn't have let me go,' Miss St. George observed.

'Most certainly I should not. Good gracious, Leila, can't you understand that you are making yourself perfectly ridiculous, besides endangering your chance of marrying really well? I can assure you that you will never marry the Duke of Hurstbourne, because I shall take measures to prevent that if you drive me to employ them; but my firm belief is that he won't propose to you. Are you so blind as not to see that he has lost his heart to poor little Nora Martyn? I don't say that he will make a duchess of her—that would be too absurd; although the poor child may be silly enough to fancy that he will.'

I confess that I should have been in honour bound to sneeze before that if I could have managed it, but it takes a few moments to get up a thoroughly natural and effective sneeze. Under cover of the tremendous hullabaloo which I presently succeeded in raising Nora made good her escape, while I stepped smilingly forth from my ambush to face the disconcerted ladies.

They must have felt disconcerted, and one of them looked so; the other, I am forced by the veracity incumbent upon a conscientious historian to admit, did not. Miss St. George had one of her usual vague nods at my service, and, as usual, gave me to understand that my value in her estimation, whether as a visitor or as an eavesdropper, amounted exactly to zero.

'If you haven't anything more to say just at present, I'll go upstairs and change,' she remarked to her aunt, and so left me to receive Lady Deverell's apologies, of which I was not defrauded.

Lady Deverell was ashamed of herself, and admitted as much with a candour which disarmed attack. 'People have no business to hide behind screens, and listeners hear no good of themselves,' she continued, 'but I am very sorry that you overheard what I said just now. Nevertheless, it was the truth, you know.'

'The truth that Hurstbourne has lost his heart to Nora, but that it would be too absurd to credit him with any intention of marrying her?' I asked.

'Oh, well, of course I shouldn't have used those words in speaking to you; but, if you are not aware of the facts, you really ought to have been aware of them.'

'Such is my density,' I replied, 'that what you call facts have remained, and still remain, unacknowledged by me. Supposing them to be facts, they make you out a trustworthy sort of chaperon, don't they?'

Lady Deverell sat down and began to defend herself against accusations which I had not made.

'It is all very well to abuse me,' said she, 'but I have done the best I could, and it happens to be my duty to take care of my niece as well as your sister. I don't see that I am to blame for having taken a little advantage of that young man's infatuation. If Nora had taken a fancy to him it might have been different, but she hasn't.'

'How do you know that?' I inquired.

'I have eyes and ears; I have seen her with him and heard a good deal of what she has said to him. Like other girls, she thinks it a fine thing to have captivated a duke; but I really don't believe that she would marry him even if he were to propose to her. It is only fair to Nora to say that I have always recognised her keen sense of right and wrong.'

'I wish,' I remarked, 'that yours were equally keen. It is only fair to myself to say that I consider you a most immoral old lady.'

'Very well,' returned Lady Deverell, with a short laugh; 'under the circumstances you are entitled to be rude, and we won't quarrel over it. I know you don't like me, and, frankly speaking, I don't much like you; still I am not quite so bad as you suppose. I wouldn't place Nora's happiness in jeopardy even for the sake of that tiresome and perverse girl Leila; I have profited by the course of events, that is all.'

I had never liked Lady Deverell so well as I did at that moment. She was really an immoral old lady, but her fighting instincts were those of the good old race to which she belonged; and if she could only have made up her mind to cast aside all affectation of being religious, she probably would not have been a worse member of the community than other dowagers. We concluded a sort of armed truce, and she begged me not to make mischief by repeating to Nora a fragment of conversation which had never been intended to reach my ears. I thought it unnecessary to mention that the screen which had concealed me at the time had likewise concealed my sister.

I was walking down St. James's Street, on my way to lunch at the club, when I encountered Hurstbourne, who stopped me in order to say excitedly: 'Look here, old chap; I'll give you a real good tip for once. Back Mock Turtle for all you're worth. He can't lose, and I can get you two to one even now.'

I shook my head and declined the tempting offer. I know very little about racing, but I was dimly aware that Mock Turtle was one of the horses that Hurstbourne had bought with their engagements, and that the animal was entered for some race or other in the forthcoming Sandown meeting.

'Have *you* backed him for all you're worth?' I asked.

'That wouldn't be much, would it?' he laughed. 'I've backed him pretty heavily though, and I've backed The Crocodile, too, for the other event, which isn't an absolute certainty, I confess.' He paused for a moment, tapping his boot with his cane and gazing down the street. 'By the way,' he resumed, 'you're coming with us to old Mother Deverell's hop next Thursday, aren't you?'

'I shouldn't think I was,' I answered; 'as far as I know, I haven't been invited.'

'Of course you have been invited, and of course you'll have to come. These two blessed races will be over by then, and I shall know better how I stand than I do now.'

I don't know whether he meant me to infer that, if Mock Turtle won, he would take that opportunity of proposing to Miss

St. George. He looked as if he wouldn't mind being questioned—which, I daresay, was why I abstained from questioning him. I was out of all patience with him, and that is the truth. Perhaps I was out of patience with Nora and with Lady Deverell, and with myself to boot. There are moments when the ridiculous and un-called-for contrariety of things is too much for the patience even of a man who is at once prosaic and a poet.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### HURSTBOURNE HAS MANY WARNINGS.

I HAD the effrontery to call myself a poet in the last paragraph of the last chapter, and I don't know that my presumption was any the more excusable because I qualified it by the statement that I was a prosaic poet. I hasten to substitute the assertion that I am, or at least once was, a prosaic rhymester, which is a more intelligible definition than the other. What, I have sometimes wondered, are the constituent qualities of a true poet? I am not going to admit that facility of expression is one of them, because that may be acquired, readily in some cases, slowly and painfully in others, by everybody, just as everybody may learn to play the piano after a fashion. But I suppose that one essential attribute of the true poet is a certain insight into the by-ways of human nature which can never be learnt by the majority of his fellow-creatures, though many of them may be quite as well able as he to distinguish black from white, and A from B. Had I been gifted with as much of that faculty as was required for reading the not very recondite thoughts of such persons as Nora and Hurstbourne and Lady Deverell and Miss St. George, I should doubtless have felt less perturbed about them all than I did; but the more I reflected, the more uncertain I became as to what they would be at, and this naturally rendered me down-hearted as well as a trifle cross. Moreover, the control of events seemed to have been absolutely removed from my hands; so that, like a weary player, I was chiefly anxious to reach a foregone conclusion, to see the curtain fall and have done with it.

The fall of the curtain was not unlikely to take place at Sandown, but I declined to accompany Hurstbourne thither, pleading as an excuse that I was not a member of the club, and

that I preferred, for choice, to escape the contumely with which outsiders are treated on that exclusive pleasure-ground. Lady Charles also, for once, decided to remain at home. It was a very hot day, and she was tired, she said. She certainly looked so. Probably it had at length dawned upon her that her son had made a most stupendous fool of himself, and, for all I know, she may have begun to realise that she herself had been in a large measure to blame for his folly. It did not really signify, because the milk was spilt, and there was no more use in crying over it than there was in snapping at me. She did snap at me when we met at the luncheon hour—it was not often that she behaved in that way, poor good-natured soul—and I will not deny that I snapped back at her. If our nerves were on edge, and if we both expected to hear of a catastrophe before dinner-time, we had no great cause to feel penitent or to ask pardon of one another.

However, that good Lady Charles's conscience must have been tenderer than mine, for about six o'clock she sent to beg that I would come downstairs and have a cup of tea with her; and when I appeared, in obedience to her request, she apologised, a little awkwardly yet quite sufficiently, for having been rude to me earlier in the day.

'To tell you the truth, Mr. Martyn,' said she, 'I am not happy about his Grace. I am afraid he is spending more money than he ought.'

'There is no doubt about that,' I replied. 'I have been warning him that he was doing so for a long time past; but I can't do more than warn him. I wish it had occurred to you to do as much a little sooner.'

She sighed and remarked, with a queer mixture of regret and complacency, that I perhaps didn't understand the hereditary tendency of the family. 'The Gascoignes,' said she, 'have been generous and open-handed from time immemorial. His father was just the same, and so, I must say, was the late duke, although—— But, at all events, such is the family disposition, and it isn't a disposition to be ashamed of, after all.'

'It is a disposition which requires to be supported by large revenues,' I observed. 'Mr. Paul Gascoigne appears to have obtained the revenues and escaped the generic taint.'

'Well, you wouldn't wish Arthur to resemble him, I should hope!'

'No; except in respect of income. But as you and Hurstbourne are agreed in despising him, why are you so desperately



bent upon rivalling him? I believe two-thirds, if not the whole, of these embarrassments are due to your insane attempts to pit a poor man against a rich one on the very field where the rich man is sure of ultimate victory.'

'Not at all!' returned Lady Charles with some animation. 'Fight him we must, and Arthur is quite right to fight him; but it isn't only by spending as much money as he does that we hope to show him that he is not invincible.'

'The common household flea,' I ventured to remark, 'is not invincible; yet one doesn't expend one's life and one's fortune and any little intelligence that one may possess in stooping to conquer him. A simpler and better plan is to avoid his haunts.'

I should doubtless have proceeded to the utterance of further indiscretions had not my oration been cut short by the entrance of Hurstbourne, who bounced into the room with a radiant countenance, and a pair of field-glasses slung over his shoulder, to announce that Mock Turtle had proved worthy of the confidence reposed in him by his backers.

'It looked like a near thing,' he told us; 'but the horse really won as he chose, and I believe the poor old Crocodile would have about won his race, too, if he hadn't been a bit unlucky. Well, one mustn't be greedy; it's something to have pulled off the big event, isn't it?'

He was so elated that I had not the cruelty to inquire what might be the exact pecuniary result of having pulled off the big event, nor did he volunteer any more mercenary details for our benefit. The nearest approach that he made to a statement bearing upon that point was when he remarked exultingly:

'This will be a rare sell for Paul Gascoigne! He was going about all over the place yesterday telling people that I was broke, and pretending to be deeply afflicted. He'd be afflicted without any pretence if he knew how many thousands more to the good I am this evening than I was when he spoke.'

So we gave ourselves up to triumph and mutual congratulation, and it was not until the next morning that I took leave to beg for more specific information. It then appeared that Hurstbourne really had won a rather large sum of money in bets; the stakes did not seem to have been worth very much. Whether his success was a thing to rejoice over or not depended entirely upon the view that he might take and the use that he might make of it. It would be of no sort of service to him or anybody else if it

only enabled him to go on living in the same way for a few more months; and this was what I strove to impress upon him while we were driving together in a hansom towards the City, where we had some business to transact with his lawyers.

'Well, hang it all, Martyn!' he exclaimed reproachfully, 'it's better to have won than to have lost; you'll allow that, surely. What a dogged old wet blanket you are!'

'I shouldn't always be a wet blanket if the chimney wasn't always on fire,' I returned; 'it's worth while to maintain that unpleasant character if I can prevent the house from being burnt down.'

'Ah, but can you? Why not be jolly until the conflagration sets in? It's bound to come, I expect, and we're prepared for it — my mother and I. I daresay we shall manage to make ourselves tolerably comfortable among the ashes; it won't be an altogether novel experience to us, you see. Anyhow, we can't be prudent and penurious until we're forced to be so; we aren't made that way.'

'There's no accounting for tastes,' I sighed, 'and if it were only a question of you and your mother——'

He understood my delicate allusion, for he laughed and declared that it wasn't yet a question of anybody else. To be sure, it *might* be, because there was such a thing as disinterested affection, although, of course, a fellow whose mind was so warped by unreasoning hatred of women as mine was wouldn't believe it. He did not, he made haste to add, flatter himself that he had inspired any woman with sentiments of disinterested affection.

'I wouldn't, if I were you,' I responded drily; 'such an illusion as that would be liable to be rudely dispelled from one moment to another.'

The idea of Miss St. George manifesting disinterested affection by taking up her abode upon a cinder-heap with the man of her choice was really a little bit too comic.

Our conference with the lawyers had a somewhat sobering effect upon Hurstbourne, who, I take it, did not want to be reduced to downright poverty, and who, notwithstanding his brave words, probably did not believe altogether in the imminence of such a melancholy event. We agreed to walk home, and, as we paced along the Embankment, I talked to him with a seriousness which he professed himself able to appreciate.

'Only, you know,' said he, 'I can't begin cutting things down

to-morrow. Let's get to the end of the season, and then we'll see. I suppose you won't understand what I mean; but it's a sort of point of honour with me not to cave in to Paul Gascoigne.'

I confessed my utter inability to understand what Mr. Gascoigne had to do with his cousin's annual expenditure, whereupon Hurstbourne burst out laughing, and declared that it wasn't a bit of good to argue with a man who was 'so beastly literal.' Doubtless he was right. Nothing could be gained by argument when the real premisses were not before us, and I could only hope that Miss St. George, who was far more competent to undertake the task than I, would ere long convince him of the vanity of his ambitions.

By the time that we had reached Whitehall, we had abandoned the subject of finance. We were progressing along that thoroughfare, keeping up a desultory conversation upon topics of general interest, when whom should we encounter but the very insufficient fount and origin of all our woes. Mr. Gascoigne was evidently on his way towards Westminster, and looked the earnest legislator all over, with his unbuttoned frock coat and his neat umbrella, which he carried over his shoulder, in imitation of a distinguished statesman with whose policy he seldom finds himself in accord. Nothing, I should think, can possibly prevent Mr. Gascoigne from becoming Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster some day. He was in plenty of time, and that, no doubt, was why he condescended to pull up and shake hands with us both.

'Well, Arthur,' said he, 'you were lucky, for once, at Sandown yesterday, I am glad to hear.'

'I won one race and lost another; I didn't do badly on the day,' answered Hurstbourne. 'I don't know why you should be glad to hear of it, though.'

'I am always glad to hear of your having been successful,' was Mr. Gascoigne's bland rejoinder. 'I only wish you gave me more frequent occasions for rejoicing on that score.'

'Oh, I'll make you rejoice once or twice yet before I die,' retorted Hurstbourne grimly. Hurstbourne is as pretty a fighter as anybody could wish to see, but he requires the *fleuret de combat*; he doesn't excite admiration when the buttons are on the foils.

My eyes were upon Paul Gascoigne's face, and for one instant I saw him look very nasty indeed; but he knew how to control himself, and it was in his customary tone of composed affability that he said: 'You are going to Lady Deverell's ball to-night, I suppose?'

'Yes, I am,' replied Hurstbourne, curtly. 'Are you?'

'I hope so. I may be detained rather late at the House, but I shall try to put in an appearance during the course of the evening. Lady Deverell and Miss St. George kindly made such a point of my being there that I mustn't break faith with them.'

Hurstbourne hailed a passing hansom and jumped into it. Unlike his cousin, he had little or no self-control, and I think he often ran away, as it were, from his temper, fearing lest it might lead him into doing or saying something that he might afterwards regret.

'Are you coming home, Martyn?' he called out.

'Not just yet,' I answered; 'I have one or two things to do first.'

I really had one or two things to do, but it was not so much on that account that I allowed him to drive away alone, as because I knew by a sort of intuition that Mr. Gascoigne wanted to speak to me. So strong was that impression on my part that, as soon as I was left upon the pavement with the recently-elected M.P., I said somewhat abruptly: 'Well, what is it?'

He smiled and remarked: 'You are really very quick, Mr. Martyn. Yes, it is quite true that I am glad to have this opportunity of saying a few words to you about Arthur. It would be idle to blink the fact that he and I are—simply and solely through his choice—in the position of antagonists, and I daresay I may assume that you are on his side in an antagonism which I am unaware of having done anything to provoke. It is just because you are on his side, because you are a friend of his, and because you are believed to have influence over him, that I am anxious to convey a hint to him through you to which he certainly would not listen if it were to come directly from me. I am not, believe me, malicious; I have no desire to injure him, but I believe that I have it in my power to injure him somewhat seriously, and circumstances may arise which will leave me no option but to exercise that power. To speak quite candidly, I allude to his attentions to Miss St. George. For reasons upon which I need not enter, those attentions are as disagreeable to me as they are to the young lady's aunt, and they really must be discontinued. If they are not, I fear that I shall be driven, much against my will, to have recourse to the measures at which I have hinted.'

'I don't call that speaking quite candidly,' I replied. 'One would like to have something more definite than a hint before taking upon oneself to meddle with other people's affairs.'

'Quite so, but it will be obvious to you that I cannot be more explicit without betraying what I trust may remain a family secret. Arthur, I have no doubt, has told you of a conversation which I had with him at Lavenham; I must leave you to draw your own conclusions as to the nature of the secret in question.'

'I understand, then,' said I, 'that your threat is this: your cousin is to stop flirting with Miss St. George, or else you will circulate some scandalous story, true or false, about his father; and, although you failed to frighten him by that threat, you think I may do so. I am obliged to you for your considerate suggestion, but I am not going to take advantage of it, and I will tell you why. I don't believe you can prove anything; had you been able to do so, you would have come forward with your proofs long before this.'

'Do you imagine, Mr. Martyn,' asked Mr. Gascoigne gravely, 'that the credit of the family name counts for nothing with me?'

'It can't count for much,' I rejoined, 'since you propose to sacrifice it unless you are gratified by a surrender which certainly will not be made. I couldn't ask Hurstbourne to make that surrender, even if I believed in your power to throw discredit upon anybody except yourself; but I don't. Good morning.'

I marched off with my head in the air, and with perfect consciousness of having made a foe. It did not, however, seem likely that Mr. Gascoigne would ever be able to do me much harm, while he would assuredly do Hurstbourne all the harm that he could, whether his conditions were complied with or not. Therefore, I did not think that I had been guilty of a diplomatic error by dealing with him in that high and mighty fashion, nor did I deem it advisable to report a menace to which I was disposed to attach very little importance.

Both Hurstbourne and Lady Charles were dining out that evening, and had, I believe, other engagements as well, so that I did not go with them to Lady Deverell's ball. It was close upon midnight when I arrived in Upper Grosvenor Street, for I had not hurried myself, knowing that my personal participation in the revels would be of that passive kind which soon palls upon the participator. The street was blocked with carriages and the house with guests, insomuch that it took me a good ten minutes to reach the landing at the top of the stairs, the nose of my hostess, *late refulgens*, serving me as a beacon towards which to shape my course. I gathered that she must have been blowing it more than usual, and consequently that she must be more than usually



out of temper, which, indeed, I found to be the case as soon as I joined her.

‘Oh, how do you do?’ she said in an acrimonious tone. ‘Your sister has been inquiring for you; she thought you weren’t coming. The Duke of Hurstbourne has been here for ever so long. He seems bent upon making a night of it.’

I edged my way on towards the ball-room without stopping to ask her to explain herself. I know what women are when their tempers have been upset; they are just like certain breeds of dogs, who, the moment that they have become excited, must needs bite somebody, and would as soon bite their best friends as anybody else. Hurstbourne, I presumed from Lady Deverell’s remarks, was making fierce love to Miss St. George somewhere or other; but I really couldn’t help it if he was. The utmost that I could do was to see for myself what he was about, and then endeavour to restrain the noble ire of Mr. Paul Gascoigne, supposing that gentleman to be present. However, it was some little time before I could see anything, except the backs and heads of persons immediately in front of me. It was all very well for Lady Charles Gascoigne to assert that Lady Deverell knew nobody, and possibly she did not know the smartest of the smart, but she had contrived to get together an enormous number of people, amongst whom I recognised (from having had the privilege of gazing at their photographs in the shop windows) quite a respectable sprinkling of notabilities. Her ball was very well done, too; the flowers alone must have cost her as much money as would have provided me with the necessaries of life for six months.

While I was making my little observations, the music ceased, and presently Nora, in the wake of other couples, passed close beside me. She at once disengaged herself from the arm of her cavalier to take possession of mine, whispering, ‘Let us get out of this for a minute, Phil, I want to speak to you.’

After we had extricated ourselves with a struggle from the surging throng, I led her, or rather she led me, to the extreme top of the staircase, where we seated ourselves upon the floor, in accordance with what, I am given to understand, is the custom, and having, indeed, nothing else to sit upon.

‘Well,’ she began somewhat impatiently, ‘have you done anything?’

‘Done anything?’ I repeated. ‘No; I haven’t done anything particular that I am aware of. I haven’t warned Hurstbourne off from the neighbourhood of Miss St. George, if that is



what you mean. I don't much believe in the danger; but if I did believe in it, the very last thing that I should do would be to wave a danger-flag before his eyes.'

'The danger is real, Phil, whether you believe in it or not. He has been dancing with her the whole evening. I don't exactly know what you mean by waving danger-flags; but I should have thought you might at least have told him what you and I overheard the other day. That, surely, would have opened his eyes.'

'To what, my dear? To the agreeable circumstance that Lady Deverell and Miss St. George had noticed the very thing that he was anxious to force upon their notice, and that you had played the part which he was graciously pleased to assign to you to perfection?'

'No; only perhaps to the fact that he has treated me as no gentleman ought to treat a friend.'

'Ah, that is another matter,' I said. 'If you wanted me to mention that to him, you should have said so, and I'm not sure that I shouldn't have obeyed your instructions. But I understood that you regarded him and his flirtations with absolute indifference.'

'That only means that you are vexed with me, as well as with him, and that you won't stir a finger to help either of us. I thought you were a better friend than that, Phil.'

'I am a friend like another,' I replied rather crossly (for I suppose the truth was that she had drawn a fairly accurate sketch of my mental condition); 'only it seems to me that friendship implies some sort of reciprocity. I have told Hurstbourne over and over again that he will be an ass to propose to Miss St. George; what more can I do? If you think I should prove my friendship for you or for him by telling him that, in your opinion and mine, he has behaved very like a cad to you, I am willing to go that length. It will be a little bit humiliating to have to do it, though.'

'I daresay it would—and I daresay it wouldn't answer our purpose either,' agreed Nora, getting up. 'All I know is that I, personally, have submitted to as much humiliation as I can bear; he has reached the end of my patience. I shouldn't so much have minded his dancing with me and sitting out dances with me, and all that, if he hadn't thought it necessary to play the whole comedy. It wasn't necessary. He might just as well have talked about hunting or about anything else that would have given us the appearance of being deeply interested in one another; but,

instead of that, he must needs say things which—well, I am not going to let him speak to me again as he spoke this evening, even to keep him out of the reach of Miss St. George's clutches.'

This was pleasant hearing for an already irate brother. I was about to demand a fuller explanation when Hurstbourne himself ran breathlessly up the last flight of stairs to join us.

'So there you are, Miss Nora!' he exclaimed. 'I hope you feel ashamed of yourself. You can't have forgotten that you promised me the dance which is just over.'

'Is it over?' she returned. 'Then I may as well sit down again.' And she suited the action to the word. 'Phil and I are enjoying ourselves together,' she added; 'we mustn't keep you in this remote spot, or you won't be able to find your partner for the next dance.'

He stared at her with a comical mixture of surprise and penitence. 'What have I done?' he asked. 'Why am I to be first thrown over and then kicked downstairs?'

One often laughs when one is not feeling particularly merry. His phrase brought to my memory a familiar quotation, the first words of which struck me as so painfully, ludicrously appropriate that I burst into one of those abrupt guffaws for which I have all my life enjoyed an unenviable celebrity. By the time that I had composed myself Hurstbourne was half-way down towards the landing, looking extremely huffy, while Nora's pale cheeks were suffused with the rosy hue of wrath. The uproar of my own hilarity had prevented me from hearing what passed between them, but no doubt she had given him the recollection of a waspish speech to take away with him.

She left my side almost immediately afterwards, a partner having come up to claim her, and during the rest of the evening I saw her only from a distance. From a distance also I surveyed the other actors in the little drama with which I was concerned—Miss St. George, who looked superbly handsome and triumphant; Hurstbourne, who seemed to be in one of his reckless moods; and the future Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, at whose elbow black Care had evidently stationed herself. By watching the pantomime which unfolded itself at intervals before me, I could form a pretty shrewd conjecture at what they were all doing and saying; sometimes they were together, sometimes one of them (Paul Gascoigne) was left out in the cold; once I fancied that there was a sort of incipient altercation between him and Hurstbourne; but it came to nothing, and shortly after two o'clock the

politician went away—beaten out of the field, I assumed. I hardly know why I myself lingered on until sunrise. Perhaps I wanted to walk home with Hurstbourne (Lady Charles had long since departed), and to hear the worst from his lips. Anyhow, I did wait for him; and one result of my having done so was that I was present when he at last took leave of his hostess. He congratulated her upon the success of her ball, and said it had been 'awfully jolly.'

'I am glad you have enjoyed yourself,' she returned, glaring at him, 'because you will never enjoy yourself in this house again, nor will you ever dance with Leila again. I cautioned you at supper-time that I wouldn't have it; but for reasons best known to yourself, you have chosen to defy me. So much the worse for you. You don't understand; but you will before this time to-morrow. Don't blame me, that's all; I gave you fair warning, remember.'

'What can she have meant?' I asked Hurstbourne, as we left the house.

'I really don't know, and I really don't care,' he answered, laughing and lighting a cigar; 'I suppose she meant that she was in a devil of a rage.'

After all, I might as well have gone to bed some hours earlier, for he gave me no chance of interrogating him. He belonged to one of those clubs which are kept open all night, and thither he now saw fit to betake himself, remarking that it was too late or too early for respectable people to be seen entering their homes. Probably he did not wish to be interrogated.

(To be concluded.)

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

'**T**ERRIBLE learning!' Mr. Matthew Arnold used to say, as he reviewed the performances of Homeric commentators. 'Terrible learning!' the admirers of the *Odyssey* must exclaim as they read *Homerische Untersuchungen*, by Herr U. von Willamowitz Möllendorff. This critic, who has a great reputation for learning and brilliance, discovers that the *Odyssey* is not the best-told tale in the world, not a masterpiece of construction, not very ancient. It is the work, as it stands, of a Botcher, or Patcher, a miserable journeyman poet, who lived about 650 B.C. He took three older epics, which again were based on older lays. He cut them about, docked beginnings and endings, added Book I., and a great deal of other nonsense of his own, dragged in bits of the ancient poems all out of place, and by his tailor craft, scissors, and patches, this snip stuck and stitched together our *Odyssey*. Why he did it, what he had to get by it, nobody knows. He was living in an age when poets like Arctinus, Engammon, Agias, and others were making epics of their own, now lost. Others were turning to lyric effusions. There can have been no great reading public, and where was an audience for the whole *Odyssey*? Why did a patchwork come to be accepted as inspired, while the works of Arctinus perished? How was Greece, how was all the world deluded into accepting a wretched piece of tailor-craft as an epic? Who paid the tailor? He got no renown, nobody ever heard his name mentioned, and I fail to see how he could get any solid reward. It was as if Mr. Tupper's continuation of *Christabel* were to be accepted as a solid part of the original, and the whole assigned to Chaucer.

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The arguments for this bold and revolutionary theory are worthy of the topic. It would not entertain the general reader if I gave them here, but I may at least offer a parallel instance. Suppose, in a future age, long after our day, *Ivanhoe* comes into the hands of a German, a child of the Higher Criticism. He would treat it thus:—

That *Ivanhoe* for a solid one-ply romance by a single poet is to be accepted will man no longer maintain. Rather is it the patchwork of a redactor, who has before him several older sagas. The kernel of *Ivanhoe* is an Old English saga borrowed from the Return of Odysseus. That Ireland also such a saga had, in national-wise bedraped, is not to be denied.<sup>1</sup> Also England shall such a saga have had; of this no doubtful traces remain in the *Ivanhoe* saga as we possess it. The kernel is the Return of Ivanhoe (Odysseus) from the wars in the Orient. Naturally has Jerusalem of Ilios the place taken. In the oldest Return was Ivanhoe no bachelor; clearly he was the husband of Rowena, the Faithful Wife, a character from the general stock of *Märchen* out-taken. When now Ivanhoe is returned, he is in the disguise of a beggar ('palmer') beshrouded. Odysseus-like, he has a Faithful Swineherd, Gurth (Eumæus): in the Gurthish hound, Fang, may one well an echo of Argus recognise. The character of the neat-herd fails, or, more truly, is by a late botcher disguised as Wamba, the jester. The Faithful Wife (Rowena) is by wooers beset; such are De Bracy, the Templar, Front de Bœuf. In the original Return was Ivanhoe by his wife with sore difficulty recognised. Then shall he attack the wooers in his own house. Later shall this by the chivalrous romancers be overset; Ivanhoe shall in the hall of the wooers be captive. Him shall the Faithful Swineherd, with English comrades, rescue. Clearly stand out the anachronisms of the late expander. Robin Hood (Locksley) is a hero of the time of Edward II. Hereon see Child's epoch-making book, *The English and Scottish Ballads*. Herein has the expander erred, the weak-head Richard I. has interwoven right unendurably. Ivanhoe shall now, as the chivalrous spirit prompts, be Rowena's lover, no longer her husband. Much later, in an age when the Hebrews were, for their sufferings in Russia, by the people pitied, has one the Rebecca and Isaac of York episode not unskilfully interwoven. Earlier than the later *Judenhetz* can this nowise be. Older than the Ivanhoish Nostos (Return) is the Song of Ursula, at the burning of the Wooers' castle. Ursula, not to the Christian God, but to Woden and Zernebock, cries aloud. Here have we a before-the-English-invasion-of-Britain song undeniably to recognise: right probably under Slavonic influence composed. Zernibog is a God of the Slavs, of the English never. Well has Freeman in his *Norman Conquest* this remarked, but the necessary conclusion has he not drawn. The Ursulaish song, then, is an old-of-the-English-of-the-continent

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of the Irish *Odyssey* is published by Mr. Nutt.

*Dichtung* into the later, not-before-the-Crusades-romance in-shoved. For a late interpolation bit the of the dead Athelstane resuscitation episode is to be recognised. Never is this of the old poet, nor even of the younger expander, an invention. That some one redacted all, in a late pedantic age, an introduction and very unscientific notes in-shoving, man rightly has perceived. The *Ivanhoe* saga, then, its ground elements, its expansion, perversion, and interpolations, now rightly for a patch-work on the *Nostos* (Return) of Odysseus is to be recognised. Shall men the old collective name 'Scott' mention and to tradition appeal, we must answer that 'Scott' for but a national name for the mythical composer of all old Scotch poems and romances, even as Homer for the Greeks, long ago has by criticism been explained.

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That would be the humour of it. The German critic of the *Odyssey* dedicates his collection of mares' nests to Wellhausen, the critic of the Old Testament. Are we to begin to suspect that Old Testament criticism is on the same level as that of the ingenious dissection of *Ivanhoe*? This were shocking indeed to serious souls.

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An author has been complaining in the *Athenæum* (July 30) that English literature is gagged. He has put forth all his art, and his whole soul, on a novel with a social theme. It was a first instalment of what he had it at heart to say. But his publisher said that the book would ruin the author; nobody would accept any more novels of his. I am not in the least inclined to gird at this misfortune, with which every writer must sympathise, but I do deny the conclusion that English literature is gagged. What topic the author had chosen of course we cannot guess. But let us suppose than an author is a Malthusian, or a Free Lover, or has a just and natural desire to reform the world on a variety of other delicate matters. It seems clear, to myself, that his ideas cannot be put in a manner too simple, stern, and scientific. A novel is not the place for them. A novel is not a treatise. Many things that need to be said should be said simply, directly, with all authorities and evidence. They ought not to be mixed up with flirtations, love affairs, and fanciful episodes. They may be true, but, presented in a romance, they may be most mischievously misunderstood and perverted. *Nana*, for example, may contain what we should know, and circumstances which we should



endeavour to rectify. But a reform of morals would not be aided by letting *Nana* circulate in English among the readers of Miss Yonge. At certain ages facts of importance in themselves become mere excitements of prurient curiosity. Plain speaking is well, but then it *should* be plain, and have no attraction beyond the stern attraction of truth. Of course I am not suggesting that the unpublished novel had any resemblance to *Nana*. It may have been on any one of a dozen subjects. Whatever the subject, a novel really is not a tract, nor a sermon, nor a treatise. The general sense does not always recognise this, but it does recognise that many matters may be discussed for which a novel, going everywhere, lying everywhere, is not a proper vehicle. Whatever this romance may be, I never saw the tract-novel yet in which the discussion was fair. Much as all discussion clogs a novel, were the discussion to be logical and exhaustive, it would make the novel impossible. Suppose I discuss Homeric unity in a novel! I fear I should be gagged; my publisher would see that it spelled ruin. But it does not follow that a novelist 'must work under painfully soul-killing restrictions.' It only follows that his novels should be novels, and conform to the conditions of the art of fiction.

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The following verses are by Mr. James Dryden Hosken, author of *Phaon and Sappho* and *Nimrod*.<sup>1</sup> He is, as is well known, a 'time-bound poet.' If life be short, compared to art, much shorter is the leisure of a poet who is a rural postman. Mr. Hosken's knowledge and skill should have a fairer chance, and surely in a country like ours it ought not to be very difficult to secure the chance for such a meritorious student and artist. As much has been done for men like Alexander Smith. It is a pity that Mr. Hosken is not a Scotsman!

The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne.—CHAUCER.

Visions of too lovely things  
To endure the strain of time,  
Ere we give you shape and wings  
Of harmonious thought or rhyme,  
Life so short is come and gone  
While we dream:  
Only touches of the dawn  
Glint our theme.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans.

What unwritten glories hover  
 Round the time-bound poet's brain,  
 Fairer than the thoughts of lover,  
 Whose excess of joy is pain ;  
 Life will not allow the mind  
     Time to live :  
 What can we but touch the rind  
     Art can give ?

Ah ! ye uncreated dreamings—  
 Epic, lyric, song, romance—  
 Life's so short ! we catch the gleamings  
     Of your meaning ; can but glance  
 At your beauty as ye fly,  
     Sighing low,  
 ' Life's too short ; 'tis time to die :  
     Ye must go.'

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The *Athenæum* of July 30, in a review of the reprinted *Costume of the Clans*, by John Sobieski and Charles Edward Stuart, touches on the history of these very remarkable men. Much of their learning, in the book itself, was of the most strange inaccuracy ; yet they really were well read in Jacobite history, and must have known that Killiecrankie was not fought in 1715, nor Falkirk before Preston Pans. Their Latin was always sadly to seek ; their Greek, which, oddly enough, they quote with comparative accuracy, was possibly revised by some more systematic scholar. When he comes to sketching the story of the two Stuarts the reviewer in the *Athenæum* finds fault with the correctness of the new introduction to the *Costume of the Clans*, but he is not quite accurate himself. For example, the essay in the *Quarterly Review* for 1847, on the *Tales of the Century*, and other books by the brothers, was not by Lockhart. The authors of that review are quite well-known men. The brethren themselves, if one may judge by a furious piece of verse appended to *Lays of the Deer Forest* (1848), had a very shrewd guess. The genealogy given by the *Athenæum* is also far from adequate. The dates of the brothers' births do not, I think, 'go far to dispel the notion that they can have fought under Napoleon I.' That notion seems to be based on poems in *Lays of the Deer Forest*, such as 'Retribution' and 'The Boy of Leipzig.' It is not for me to guess whether those poems are merely dramatic, or whether they are intended to be taken as narratives of personal adventure.

But, as the elder brother was born, it seems, in 1797, he would be eighteen at the date of Waterloo, and many lads have fought at a younger age than eighteen. 'The Retribution' is a very curious piece, and contains, with much incoherency, some vigorous lines. This is the mark of the poems, which are often tawdry, and lax in structure, but yet present passages of undeniable merit.

'The fallen angel's blasphemy of face,' applied to Lockhart, then editor of the *Quarterly*, is, I think, in itself a capital line, however little the reproach was deserved by the biographer of Scott. This is the characteristic of the poems, flashes of merit in the midst of unregulated composition. The volume of notes on sport, natural history, and Highland tradition, appended to the *Lays*, is excellent reading. The stories are admirably told; the sentiment for nature is genuine and sympathetic. The book<sup>1</sup> is probably little read now, and the poems, except to the inquisitive about the whole strange affair, hang as a burden on the prose. But the prose is well worth the attention of everyone who likes natural history, Gaelic legend, and the adventures of forest and flood. The book contains a flattering account of the 'Black Officer,' whose myth, with the mysterious circumstances of his death, I have told as it was told to me by a boatman on Loch Awe, in a little book of angling sketches. The new edition of the *Costume of the Clans*<sup>2</sup> appears to refer to the *Vestiarium Scoticum* as a 'feeble and clumsy' forgery. Now Scott<sup>3</sup> says, 'If it is an imposition it is cleverly done.' The book, as Scott saw it, was a copy, by Charles Stuart, from an old copy on paper in his possession. Sir Walter asked Sir Thomas Dick Lauder to examine the water-mark of the old paper copy. It proved to be older than the Union. But that old paper copy, again, was said to have a parent text, in a vellum copy, which had once belonged to Charles Edward. This copy was never offered to public scrutiny, its owner, the father of the brothers, being reluctant to part with it for that purpose. Where is that copy now? Nobody seems to know; but neither, apparently, does anyone know where the old paper copy which Sir Thomas Dick Lauder examined is to be found. To myself the *Vestiarium* seems, in language and style, very far from 'feeble' or 'clumsy.' Scott's objections to its originality are based on the inclusion of Lowland tartans, and this was defended, by the brethren, in a reply to the *Quarterly*. It is a point of antiquity on which one would not venture a remark. 'If it is an imitation, it is a very good one,' Scott repeats to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. I am pretty confident that the style and

<sup>1</sup> Blackwood, 1848.<sup>2</sup> Grant, Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, June 5, 1829.

language were, at all events, not the work of the brothers themselves. The transcript, by Charles, was decorated with spirited caricatures in red, and a man would hardly 'guy' his own production.

The claims of a grandson of Charles Edward—a son, apparently, of a child by Miss Walkinshaw—are mentioned by the *Athenæum*, but Charles himself denied formally that he ever had any child at all except the daughter whom he legitimatised and made Duchess of Albany. She died unmarried. The reviewer does not say how Admiral Allen came to be 'a claimant of the Errol (Hay) earldom,' and no light is cast on the matter by the genealogy of the Hays of Errol. The reviewer seems to think that the adventurer Watson may have 'engendered and fostered the fond imaginings' of the brethren; but what had Watson to get by it? His object was to obtain a large price for Cardinal York's papers out of the English Government. These papers have never yet been published, though a beginning was made, and Scott was on the commission. A number of letters of most curious interest are also printed in Browne's *History of the Highlands*. But undoubtedly much material remains—'dreams of exiles,' not politically important, no doubt, but with a personal interest of their own. Perhaps the papers might show how far the English Jacobites were really engaged about the time of 1745. This appears to be a moot point.

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It must be a dreadful thing to have a printer who is an idiot, and an author or editor who is—well, I do not know how to commiserate him enough. A 'Pictorial Atlas of Homer' has been sent to me, enclosing a loose slip of *errata*—'For *stinging a Bord* read *stringing a bow*.' As the picture represents an Amazon, not stinging a Bord, but actually stringing a bow, I made that correction *periculo meo*. But for 'threading a skuttle' no man could suggest the true reading—'wrapping a distaff with wool.'

#### SONG.

*What pleasures does our life afford,  
Our joys how strangely subtle!  
To-day perhaps we sting a Bord,  
To-morrow thread a skuttle.*

For 'tomb of Orcus, Cornets,' I could never have suggested 'tomb of Orcus, at Corneto.' Could you? I should have given it up. Nor for 'Megara' could the light of nature have revealed 'Alcmene.'

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Here I have an authentic message to deliver to my age. This *Ship* is not a review. Publishers and authors are requested *not* to dump down books, even novels, for review here. The vessel sails at its own free will among the oceans of literature, and the skipper selects what takes his fancy. Mr. Mark Twain, I think, mentions a hero of the west. 'His word was, *No Irish need apply.*' Nobody need 'apply' here.

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The death of Mr. Hugh Hastings Romilly is a great loss to the cause of exploring and of a sympathetic acquaintance with savage tribes. Mr. Romilly first visited the more backward races in 1879, when he went to Fiji with Sir Arthur Gordon. He had, apparently, learned to take an interest in wild life from an early acquaintance with Sir Samuel Baker. He was naturally courageous and adventurous, and, when very young, only ten years old, saved two schoolfellows from drowning. His relations never knew this till the parents of the boys sent him a present, and he was obliged to explain. On the mother's side he came of the Elliots of Minto, a race 'conversant with great adventures.' I think Mr. Romilly's first book was a small one, a curious account of the ghost of a native, seen by himself on an island of the Pacific. He also published *The Western Pacific and New Guinea* (Murray, 1886). Readers of Mr. Stevenson's *Wrecker* should turn to this, as it contains a particular account of 'Bully Hayes,' a hero mentioned by Mr. Stevenson. Says Mr. Romilly, 'He met with his death from natural causes—that is to say, he was knocked on the head with a handspike by his cook.' A clergyman who knew him said that he never wanted to find a more amusing or better informed companion. "If there's any swearing to be done on board this ship, I guess I can do it all," he said to his mate when we had a missionary on board.' But there would be no end of extracts if once we began to make them. *From My Veranda* (Nutt, 1889) is a work on New Guinea, of much interest. It irritated the Queenslanders, and the present writer was accused, in a Queensland newspaper, of contributing 'a slovenly little preface,' a delightful charge to come from the Antipodes. Mr. Romilly, after many perilous adventures in the islands and in Mashonaland, most unfortunately caught a typhoid fever at home, and so ended the life of a gallant explorer, a charming and humorous writer.

A. LANG,

